Classic Gamer Magazine
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GAME ROOM
The Triumphant Return of Bill Kunkel and The Game Doctor!
Super Huey Flies Back Onto Your Computer Screens
TRON
CGM Declares War on Classic Games!
Reviews, Editorial, Gaming Memories, and, of course, Chris Lion!
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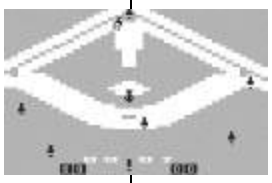
Classic Gamer Magazine

Reset!	5
Letters...Oh, we get Letters!	6
CGM Newswire	7
The Kunkel Report - by Bill Kunkel	9
Arcade Auction: One Man's Experience	10
Action Twinkle: Int'l Man of Bidding	12
Lost Arcade Classic – Danger Zone	13
Classic Ad – War Room	14
PlayStation Collectibles?	15
Fiery Political Correctness Rains Down!	17
Teach Your Children Well Part II	18
Equal Time: A Reader Responds	18
Namco Museum Review	19
Bob Harris Interview Part II	20
Classic Gaming on the Web	22
Insert Coin: Interview with Gary Vincent	23
Homebrew Review	26
PSX Retrogames	28
Retro Article: The Strategic Scenario	30
Straight From the Cat's Mouth–Jag and Lynx	33
Head 'em Off at the Past!	34
Fighting the Good Fight! War Games Overview	36
CVG 101: Please Don't Chew the Gum!	44
A Happy Child and His Cabaret Ms. Pac-Man	46
Join the Club! - Classic Gaming Clubs	47
The Best 2600 Games (That Never Existed)	48
My .025	50
Spider-Man Review for the N64	51
Atari Kids Clubhouse	54
Attack of the Super Hueys!	55
Gamelord's Commodore Dungeon	57
Deep Thaw: Very Sheedy Happenings Going On	58



RESET

A Familiar Face, The 'Doctor' is In, And On With The Show(s)

Bad Prediction!

Ha ha! So much for my prediction last issue that the Dreamcast would be around. I think I better lay off the prognosticating gig for awhile. As far as the Sega Console biting the dust, that's too bad. Great system. However, we Classic Gamers will be digging into the DC closeout software bins like white on rice. Like we need another console to collect for!

Pleased as Punch!

Ok, as you flip through the wonderful pages of this month's issue, you will probably recognize a familiar name from your past. The legendary ***Bill Kunkel*** himself has been gracious enough to come along for the ride. You probably remember Bill as one of the co-founders of the original ***"Electronic Games Magazine".*** Bill will be hosting a regular column about . . . well, about whatever he wants! This month he tells the tale of Sunsphere, a wig outlet, and a Pick Axe Pete competition.

Classic Gaming Hospital

The good thing about Bill Kunkel is that wherever he goes, ***The Game Doctor*** usually isn't too far behind. The Game Doctor was the very knowledgeable soul of Electronic Games Magazine, who seemed to know about everything game related. The good doctor has generously agreed to host a column in order to answer all those gnawing questions you may have. See page 43 on how to submit your question or problem.

Everything's Coming Up Showses!

There are a pretty fair amount of classic gaming related shows going on around the country starting this April with the Philly Classic! Hats off to all the show organizers and attendees. Check out our list on page 9 for the show(s) you'd like to attend. Hope to see you there!

Forward . . . March!

I love the smell of bit rot in the morning! This issue we take a crack at inspecting some of the many war games which were on our favorite classic systems. So, put on your favorite pair of cammies, paint your faces and give us your best war cry. It's time to kick some collective classic butt!

-Cav

About The Cover Artists

Dave Dries of *Cinemarcade.com* and Michael Thomasson joined forces to create our most spectacular cover to date. Dave Dries also creates incredible 3D classic gaming movies, which are available for download at his website. Michael Thomasson runs Good Deal Games website (*www.gooddealgames.com*), and has also recently published new games for the Sega CD. Be sure to contact them if you enjoyed the cover!

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READER FEEDBACK...

Tails. We Lose!

CGM,
In your article mentioning Sonic 2, you (You being the author) noted that Tails was unplayable and just got in the way. Not true. Try plugging in a controller in the second port in Sonic 2 or 3. You can play as Tails! He can collect rings, pick up and fly Sonic high, and the best part is.... HE NEVER DIES! Great for bosses.

From,
Chris Glass via the Internet

Thanks Chris,
Since we informed Henry of this (Henry, being the author), he has yet to put his Genesis controller down. In fact, Chris, Henry missed his deadline for this issue due to this piece of information.

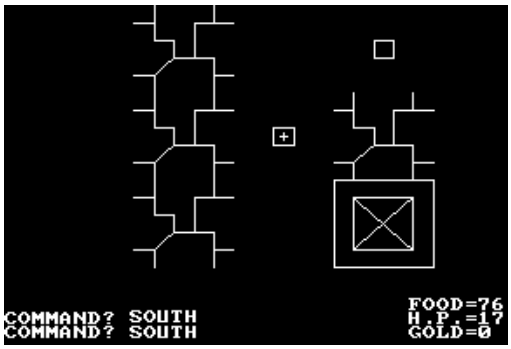
Be Sure To Learn the Akalabeth

CGM,
First some praise. I've gotten through the first four issues, and I am really enjoying them! I've had a hard time putting them down. I've found it very useful, and it's just a fun read filled with nostalgia.
Also, a slight correction -- Akalabeth (mentioned in issue 3) was not a text-only based game. The bulk of the game is a 3D dungeon crawl similar in look to Wizardry. For those interested, it can be found in Electronic Arts' Ultima Collection (along with all of the older Ultima games), and can usually be found new in stores or on eBay for between $10 to $20.

From,
Jerry Stone, via the Internet

Jerry,
Glad you're enjoying the issues!

Well, we spoke to Earl Green regarding the Akalabeth error. He immediately went into a deep depression, and of this writing has managed to keep the SWAT team at bay for 7 hours.
He did, however, release this statement, "The original Alakabeth does, in fact, have rudimentary 3-D line graphics which clearly



Akalabeth (Yup, those are graphics!)

influenced how Garriott later designed the dungeon segments of future Ultimas."
Since Earl seems sincere in his shame, we've decided to forgive him. However, we're going to check into his claim that he owns an Odyssey[2].

I Beg To Differ!

I wanted to congratulate you on another great issue. So far you are 2 for 3 in my book (I was not crazy about the last issue) (ed note: #4?) but loved the adventure themed issue and the latest issue.
The highlights of last issue was seeing a photo of Kickman. I always enjoy seeing a game I had completely forgotten about ever playing. The Odyssey 2 article was great, and the story about the 2600 frustrating games was also well done.
My only complaint would be the SNES bashing story (My .25). While it was definitely understandable that only being able to afford one game would be frustrating and perhaps tilt your view against a system, the SNES' early titles are among some of the bright spots of my collection. Super Mario World, Super Tennis, Gradius III, Pilot Wings, and Sim City were all excellent. Of course my view of the SNES is also biased because I had access to any game I wanted for $5 used. If interested I would love to write a rebuttal to the SNES article. If you are interested please let me know and I will submit. Thanks for another great issue and I am looking forward to the next.

From,
Edgar Emmerling, via the Internet

Ok, Edgar, you asked for it. In the spirit of equal time, we've decided to hand over the reins to you. You'll find your rebuttal on page 18. Just please go easy on any of Earl Green's articles this month . . . He's had kind of a tough month.

The Charlie Brown/ Joe Shlabotnik Award Goes To...

Last issue we named the winner of our poetry contest as "John Shawline." Whoops! In fact his name is John SHAWLER. Sorry about that, Jim!

"On this, for the in love ones with the old-fashioned things:) throw a glance on Classic Gamer Magazine"

-Translated on Babelfish from a French Website.

HEADLINE

SuperDuperCharger

Craig Schell, creator of the *Intellicart*, is now developing the *SuperDuperCharger* for the Atari 2600. His new device is a modified SuperCharger utilizing 64K of RAM. This will allow almost all existing Atari 2600 games to be played, and will allow development of new games using any existing bank switching method. Games can then be distributed on CD or as .bin files for use by other people.

We were able to get a hands-on preview and highly recommend this product.

http://www.schells.com/sdcharger.shtml

PORTABLE

Portable Atari, *VCSp*, Coming to Market

Benjamin J. Heckendorn has created the classic gamer's dream: a portable Atari 2600.

Similar to a Game Boy, the VCSp is a handheld unit capable of accepting full size Atari cartridges. Features include a color screen, a/v output/controls and a built in speaker with volume. The VCSp should retail for about $200.

http://www.classicgaming.com/vcsp/

PORTABLE

PocketVCS

Stuart Russell has created an open source Atari 2600 emulator for the Microsoft PocketPC.

The PocketVCS software is free to download, and since it is an open source project, improvements are not only welcomed, but encouraged.

http://members.home.net/stupocketpc/

CAR VCS

Atarimobile?

Who said classic gamers weren't a unique breed? Troy Kellog is building a modified Atari 2600 into the dash of his VW Scirocco. You pretty much have to see it to believe it.

http://www.classicgaming.com/atarimobile/index.html

COLLECTING

New Collectors Guide Available

Joe Santulli and the Digital Press gang have released the sixth edition of their collectors guide. Once again it's packed with classic gaming reviews, commentary, and classic videogame stories. Well worth the $25.00 price of admission. Visit their website for ordering details.

http://www.digitpress.com

AWARD

You Like Us! You Really Like Us!

Speaking of Digital Press…… They've awarded us the "2000 Classic Gaming Publication or Web Site of the Year Award".

We generously accept this honor and dedicate it to our readers. Thanks everyone!

http://www.digitpress.com

SEQUEL

Tron 2.0 Confirmed

According to Coronna's Coming Attractions and the Hollywood Reporter, Tron director, Steven Lisberger, is going to direct the sequel to Tron. According to the Reporter, the rumored storyline is about "*an ambitious hacker who transports himself into cyberspace to pull off the ultimate hack.*"

As of this writing no casting has been announced.

Classic Gaming Shows

PhillyClassic: April 20-21
www.phillyclassic.com

Vintage Computer Festival:
Various dates. See website.
www.vintage.org

CCAG: June 30, Lorain, OH
http://tomheroes.com/ccag.htm

JagFest 2k1: June 30
Milwaukee, WI
www.jaguar.holyoak.com/jagfest

CGExpo: August 11,12
Las Vegas, NV

Upcoming Releases

Nintendo 64

Dr. Mario 64: 4/9/01

Game Boy Advance

Super Mario Advance: 6/11/01
Pitfall: 6/11
Pac Man Advanced: TBD
Sonic Advanced: TBD

Dreamcast

Sonic Adventure 2: 6/01

PS2

Gauntlet Dark Legacy: 5/1/01

. . . Scott Stilphen's News Briefs . . .

Diet Pac-Man?? Asahi is marketing a new low-calorie carbonated beverage in Japan called, *Chara.* *http://www.coremagazine.com/news/3871.php3*

Kaboom! Goes Kablooey! Shane R. Monroe has created an update to our favorite bomb catching game. And best of all, it's free! *http://www.darkunicornproductions.com/kablooey/*

The Hunt is On! Visit the all new classic Easter Egg website and win some good old fashioned dough! We're still looking for Eggs hidden in Raiders of the Lost Ark, E.T., Quad-run, Star Raiders, and many others! *www.digitpress.com/eastereggs*

New 'Protector' for the Jag. New waves, enemies and levels. *http://songbird.atari.net/protector_se.shtml*

Compiled By
Scott Stilphen and
Chris Cavanaugh

THE KUNKEL REPORT

"Pick-Ax Pete and the Knoxville Blues"

by Bill Kunkel

Remember that classic episode of "The Simpsons" where Bart gets a fake driver's license and recruits Milhouse, Nelson and Martin for a disastrous road trip to the Knoxville World's Fair (not realizing that the guidebook they're referencing is over ten years old)? Of course, the Fair site is pictured as a dilapidated downtown dump, with former exhibits now serving as cheapie wig shops (the kids even back their rented car into the Sunsphere, toppling it).

But what most people who've seen that show don't realize is that Knoxville's 1982 World's Fair was just as sleazy, funky and depressing in 1982 as the urban wasteland depicted in that animated TV show.

I know this because I was there, on an October afternoon of the Fair's final day. Twenty-four hours earlier, President Jimmy Carter, who had played a major role in securing the Fair for Knoxville, had delivered an appropriately dispirited speech at the formal closing ceremonies. But on this, the true last day of a World's Fair, which had opened five months earlier in a rush of populist optimism and political cynicism, the closest thing to dignitaries were the editors of *Electronic Games* magazine -- Arnie Katz, Joyce Worley and me.

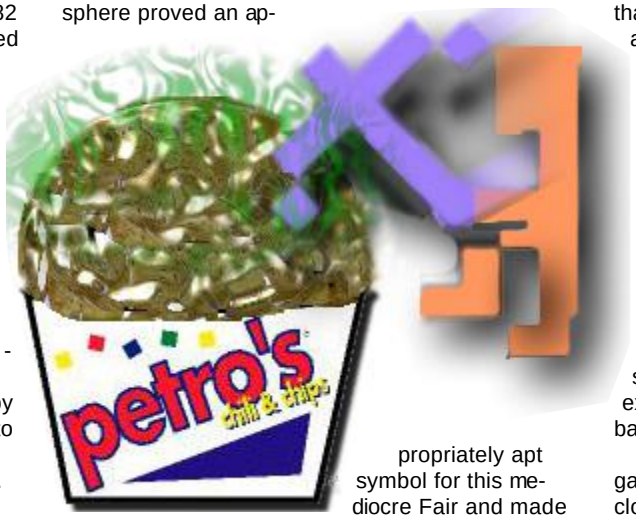
We had been flown into town that morning by the folks from Magnavox's videogame division to "host" the finals of a tournament being staged around an Odyssey2 game called *Pick-Ax Pete*. The event's formal title was the "Pick-Ax Pete Pick Off" and let me tell you, doing play-by-play and/or color commentary for a videogame tournament is not the world's easiest gig.

But please, let me dwell another moment or two on the Fair itself.

In 1982, Knoxville was a city in the throes of an economic crisis. Unemployment levels were skyrocketing. The local news broadcasts always seemed to involve listing locations where jobless citizens could apply for benefits. The Fair had been sold to voters as a quick fix panacea; just the sort of tonic to produce a financial recovery. But the event itself drew such horrible reviews -- for good and just reasons, to be sure -- that visitors stayed away in droves. By the end, the place was like a ghost town. The upside of this was that there was no wait to get into the exhibits. The downside was that the exhibits still weren't worth the wait.

So here we were, three New York writers in a city full of unemployed people at the most boring World's Fair imaginable. And within 24 hours, a host of former World's Fair employees would swell the ranks of the jobless, giving the entire city an anxious, beaten-up quality. To make matters worse, we were staying at a massive Hilton that had been constructed solely for all those Fair attendees who didn't come. The hotel itself was apparently scheduled for de-construction the minute we checked out. I have never, before or since, occupied a hotel room in which *each and every item in the place* had a price tag on it. The lamps, the coffee table, the bed, the bathroom mirror -- the entire suite was for sale! I experienced several dreams in which people would walk into my room, slap a couple of bills on the night table, and remove the chairs or the bad painting over the bed.

The 1982 World's Fair had been built on the site of an abandoned railroad yard. Its theme was "energy" and its symbol was the Sunsphere, a pedestrian-looking tower topped off with what looked like a great big grapefruit. It was, in fact, a bronze sphere that was supposed to suggest the sun. At a not-very-impressive height of 266 feet, the Sunsphere proved an appropriately apt symbol for this mediocre Fair and made the entire event look like an oversized Sunoco gas station. The Seattle World's Fair in '62 gave us the Space Needle. New York's '64 World's Fair produced the Unisphere. And now Knoxville, poor, out of work Knoxville, presented the world with what looked like nothing so much as a big, orange golf ball perched atop the world's largest tee.



Having been to the entertainment-heavy New York World's Fair in '64, I was foolishly expecting that there might be, oh, I don't know, *attractions* at a World's Fair. But no, Knoxville scrupulously avoided anything that might remotely resemble fun. There was a huge hall that housed the "International Exhibits," such as the one from Russia which, as I recall, comprised a photograph of a tractor and some sort of rock in a glass case. Of course, not all the displays were *that* elaborate. I believe Rumania left out the rock altogether.

This hangar-style hall was also the site of the Pick-Ax Pete Pick Off, and the Fair was so boring that we actually drew a small crowd (small crowds being the only kind left as the last jobs in Knoxville prepared to evaporate). Arnie is a natural at public speaking and we really tried to do a formal play-by-play and color man presentation, but there was about as much color to this tournament as a 1950 television set. I have no recollection of what I said, but I got a few laughs while Arnie struggled to describe the contest (which, due to his poor eyesight, he could barely see) for an audience that had no idea what it was looking at.

But what I remember most about Knoxville's World's Fair was the Petro. As you may or may not know, World's Fairs always strive to produce some sort of innovation in terms of fun food. And, as you also doubtless remember from three paragraphs ago, the theme of the Knoxville expo was energy. So, the culinary barbarians who ran this show "invented" the Petro. A Petro was a taco, only the shell was molded plastic (or some manner of inedible petroleum-derived substance, hence the name). Lettuce, tomatoes, cheese and chopped meat were housed in what looked like a 45rpm record that had been out in the sun too long. And, as we all know, the Petro subsequently became the single most popular fast food sensation in the world, outselling McDonalds and Burger King combined.

Oh, wait. I'm sorry. That happened in the Bizarro World.

In this reality, the Petro went the way of the Houston oil business, the North American Soccer League and 5.25" floppy disks. And, of course, the Magnavox videogame division itself, which struggled on a little longer but finally admitted defeat after showing the Odyssey3 -- a system that was identical to the Odyssey2 except it had the capability of producing background graphics -- at a CES in 1984.

That night, while the demolition crews gathered around us like vultures, the Fair closed with a pretty impressive fireworks display. Arnie, Joyce and I sat in the room with the best view and stared out the glass wall situated directly above the river on which the fireworks barge was moored. The entire spectacle seemed to be pointed right at us as the pyrotechnicians blasted apart the sky outside our window with Roman candles, aerial shells, rockets and fountain comets.

The following morning, a taxi carried us to the airport as Knoxville geared up for another assault on its unemployment services and Magnavox tried once again to get its under-rated, but doomed game system rolling.

--Bill Kunkel
Las Vegas, NV

(*Editor's Note: While looking for more details on the web regarding the Knoxville Fair, I was stunned to find that "Petro's" is still alive and kicking. I believe Mr. Kunkel is still in shock from receiving this news. So, if you're looking for a great franchise opportunity, visit www.petros.com. Just don't expect Joyce, Bill and Arnie to invest in your venture.)*

CGM

Arcade Auction: One Man's Experience

by Kyle Snyder

The date? November 11th, 2000. The time? 5:15 am. The sound? The annoying *BUZZ BUZZ BUZZ* of my alarm clock. The reason? A gigantic arcade auction being held in Timonium, Maryland with the possibility of finding some cool piece of arcade history for really cheap. This is my third auction, and I am by no means an expert just yet. My first auction was four years ago, when a local arcade closed its doors after 18 years in the business. I was a little intimidated, and I didn't bid on anything. The second auction, also in Timonium, was last November. I went with intent to buy, but was outbid on every piece I wanted. I left in a foul mood. This time will be different. Why? Because I am going WITHOUT the intent to buy. I am going to look around, network with other collectors, play some old games for free, and just enjoy the experience. Plus, I've promised Seleen that I won't clog up the house with more games. I have six machines in our game room, and room for no more. But that doesn't eliminate the possibility of bidding on parts or motherboards!

6:45 am. This is a wacky sight. Here I am, sitting on the stairs leading into my friend Bill's basement, eating a medium well steak. At a QUARTER TO SEVEN in the morning! Prime steak eatin' time if you ask me! Bill is a long time friend who just started to collect arcade games within the past year. He's gotten some incredible deals and some great games in that time, but he's never been to an auction before. Right now, he's on the internet, checking last minute info like directions and entry fees and stuff like that. Oh yeah, why a steak? Bill didn't have anything else in the house as he needed to go to the grocery store. He cooked half for himself, and the other half for me. I don't care, it tastes great!

8:15 am. We arrive. The anticipation is killing me. The auction is held in a large warehouse-style building at the Maryland State Fairgrounds. Initially, you have to sign in, let them photocopy your driver's license, give them a $5 entry fee, and a $100 deposit. No big deal here, since if you don't buy anything, you get your $100 back. If you buy something that totals more than $100, then your deposit is applied to the total cost of the item. If you buy something totaling less than $100, you get the difference back. It seems to take forever. I know these people are actually quite efficient at their jobs, but just tell that to my inner child, who is seconds away from walking into his dream arcade! They hand us our bidder cards, and we walk in.

8:30 am. Bill and I are scoping out the rows and rows of games. There must be at least 300 video games and 100 pinballs. Maybe more. Incredible! The hall is divided, with the newer videos and all the pins located on the right hand side as you walk in; the classic videos and other items like jukeboxes, video slots, and crane machines are on the left. In the middle of the hall, bisecting the left and right rows of games is maybe 200 or so folding chairs for the bidders to take a load off when the auction begins. In front of the chairs, facing them, are the small items, such as

cocktail table videos, countertop poker, baseball and trivia machines, old style table top jukeboxes from ancient diners, neon beer signs, billiard lights, and other assorted game room related items.

Surveying the classic vids, I spot a decent Galaxian machine with very nice side art, but a damaged joystick. It looks like somebody chipped half of the ball top away with a hammer and chisel! The game still works fine, though, and I play a free game. We also see tons and tons of Galagas and Ms.Pac-Mans. All are at least in good shape, and many have been restored to the point of incredible beauty! Vibrant colors on both the monitors and the cabinet art, tight and responsive joysticks, and clear sound from the speakers instantly takes me back to that 7-11 I used to play many of the games at "back in the day." I know these games will go for a hefty price, as Ms.Pac and Galaga hold the honors as the most "desirable" arcade games among everyday collectors. Further scoping reveals several very nice Battlezones, all with crystal clear vector monitors, drawing the images of the enemy tanks with unsurpassed clarity; two Centipedes, both in great cosmetic shape, but one just doesn't turn on. It could be something as simple as a $2.99 fuse... could be the power supply, or the motherboard. An original Pac-Man sits proudly in the first row. A beautiful specimen with the sunshine yellow of the cabinet such a stand out from the flat black cabinets you generally find in arcades today. The joystick is a little loose, but that's an easy fix. This one should go for reasonably high as well.

In amongst the more well-known games, we were astonished to see several old black and white monitor arcade classics, like Atari's Video Pinball. It's still a striking masterpiece of a game. A real pinball playfield, complete with disco-era artwork (dig the dancing queen with her spaghetti strap dress!), is mounted inside the cabinet, illuminated with black light. A black and white monitor reflects onto the playfield to provide the graphics for the flippers, the score, the drop targets, and the ball itself. Remarkably, after a few minutes of jumbled graphics, the game works fine!

In one of the back rows sits a lonely, unloved Tornado Baseball. This mid 70's piece has cleaned up nicely, but a note taped to the game says that it won't fire up. Perhaps something simple, perhaps not, but such a beautiful cabinet to look at. We also see many games that you just don't hear that much about anymore. A Mousetrap in good shape, but with some kind of ROM problem that keeps the game from firing up properly. A Bagman in very good condition, but with a glitch that resets the motherboard every few seconds. An Amidar in the sky blue cabinet that looks like it was pulled straight out of 1982! No fading or scratching of the art, monitor is vibrant, controls are tight. Someone's gonna be happy with this baby!

9:30 am. By this time, we are getting a little hungry again. We get some hot dogs (more meat!) from the lunch tables set up in the rear of the room, and proceed to check out the newer games. This area is where the games with the larger cabinets and 25 or 33 inch monitors are placed. Lots of Mortal Kombat 4, Maximum Hangtime, Area 51, and similar games are stashed. Most of these are in very good shape, due in part, no doubt, to the fact that these games are maybe only a few years old, compared to the 15 to 20 year age of your average classic. There are quite a few Golden Tee '97s, and '98s, probably traded in at the local bars for the newest Golden Tee title. We take special interest in the older pinballs. And when I say "older," I mean 1950's! These machines are so much narrower that your modern pinball, and it was cool to see the coin doors have 10 cent coin slots! A worn sticker on one of the games reads something like... "REWARD for information on anybody using slugs in this machine." I wondered if there really was a reward, and if anybody ratted somebody out for using the fake coins. If so, that person probably got pummeled by a gang of greasers the next time he was alone! Another strange thing about these machines is that the women on the

backglass artwork were... well... accentuated in all the right places. I couldn't help but chuckle when I thought of the TV moms of that era... June Cleaver, Donna Stone, Harriet Nelson, and how offended they would've been had any of their TV children been caught playing with such a risqué machine! "Well, I NEVER!!!!"

10 am. We take our seats. Everybody shuffles to get a good view. The head auctioneer addresses the crowd, and explains how things are going to go down. The smaller items in front of the chairs will be auctioned off first. Then, one group of auctioneers will handle the newer games and pinballs on the left. Once one row of the newer games is nearly completed, another auctioneer will begin to auction off the classics. They obviously learned from last year, where they started both sides simultaneously, and it was very difficult to tell which auctioneer was yelling what price for what game. (Both sets of auctioneers used giant speakers mounted on wheeled carts, and as such, the sound was overwhelming...) They begin to take bids on the pool table lights and the neon Miller Light signs. I glance up, and notice a fellow collector named Jim that I remembered chatting with the previous year. We reintroduce ourselves, and I introduce Bill, and then we continue to watch the

small stuff get auctioned.

"I've got a box of 45 RPM records here... looks like 300 records... can I
get $20????"

Bill, Jim and I roll our eyes, and Jim yells out "Get to the games!!!"

"This here's a Budweiser light-up sign... looks real good... can I get $50?"

11 am. Finally. The auctioning of the full size arcade classics is under way. Some young guys, perhaps the auctioneers' sons, plug up the first game in the row, the aforementioned Galaxian with the chipped joystick. The bidding begins at $200. Goes up in $50 increments until it reaches $450. The auctioneer tempts the crowd by hefting the price only another $25. Somebody raises their bidder card, and nobody challenges him.

"Can I get $500? Five hunnerd, five hunnerd, five hunnerd, she's a beauty, WORKING ALL THE WAY!!! Five hunnerd, five hunnerd.... SOLD for $475... what's your number, sir?"

The triumphant bidder holds his card up, and they record the number. The young guys hastily tilt the Galaxian up, and slide a hand truck underneath it. In a few seconds, the arcade classic is whisked away to the back of the auction hall, to be the first in a growing line of "completed" auction pieces.

The next game in the row is spotlighted. Some early 90's golf game called The Irem Skins Game. As far as golf games go, this one looks decent, but very overshadowed by the current Golden Tee Golf craze. The bidding on this piece only reaches $150. The next game is a fully restored original Ms. Pac-Man. This thing looks perfect. Brand new cabinet art, vibrant marquee, clear and sharp picture on the monitor; I wouldn't mind having it, except for the lack of space thing, and it will go for much more than I can afford to pay. The bidding starts at $500, and quickly shoots up to the $900 mark. The excitement begins to noticably die down, as people are dropping out of bidding further. No doubt the price scares them away. After a few more lower increment bids, the price is finalized at $975. Twenty five measly dollars shy of an even grand! I'm sure the seller is pleased with that development! The fourth game in the row is another Ms.Pac-Man, but in the space friendly cabaret style. For those of you who aren't familiar with cabaret cabinets, they are about two-thirds the height, width, and depth of a regular upright, and have a tasteful woodgrain motif. These mini-cabinets were designed for locations like restaurants, motel lobbies, department stores, and other potential profit sites where a full size machine would either be a tight fit, or would look out of place. These are quite valued among collectors, as they are also among the easiest cabinets to move around.This particular cabaret Ms.Pac-Man is an upgrade from a mini-Pac-Man. It has an authentic Ms.Pac-Man marquee, but no artwork on the screen glass, and it has a replacement "Ball Bat" style joystick. The bidding opens at $300. People are not as excited about this piece, probably because it is not in an original cabinet, and is lacking in terms of artwork. The bidding starts to lose steam at $500, and the cabaret ends up being sold for $550. All things considered, still a good deal.

11:30 am through 7 pm. And so it continues through the rest of the day. They plug up each game to make sure it's working before beginning the bidding, and games that don't come up at all go for very cheap. This included a clean, but dead Pole Position for $35, and the aforementioned Tornado Baseball for $10. Once the bidding is closed on a piece, it is recorded in the books, then the guys with hand trucks wheel the game away to the "closed auction" row. Funny that at no time during the auction do I hear the stereotypical shouts of "GOING, GOING, GONE!!!!" that you would expect from auction scenes in books and movies. Perhaps that is an outdated practice, or maybe these guys have always done it differently.

Throughout the day, Bill, Jim, and I might be moving right along with the pack of bidders, curious how much that Mortal Kombat in the converted Mario Bros. cabinet might go for ($60 in case you were wondering), or we may retreat to go sit down, have a snack, or just play other machines. Going to an auction WITHOUT the express purpose of buying allows you this freedom. Note which games you are interested in, and then periodically check to see if the auctioneer is near that piece yet.

7 pm. Nearing the evening hours, everybody is noticeably tired. The crowd has thinned down, as many people have already got what they came for, and left. Games in the last row go for incredibly cheap. The auctioneers are much less manic and excitable than the earlier parts of the day, and look like they just want to go home. Certainly understandable. If you just spent nine hours yelling at a crowd, and infusing excitement into bidders, you would be drained too.

I shuffle to the last of the items at the front table. Boxes stuffed with motherboards of games past. Pac-Man, Vindicators, Super Mario Bros., Mortal Kombat, NBA Jam. A group of two Mortal Kombat 2 kits, one Mortal Kombat 3 kit, and one NBA Jam kit, sells for $50 total. I approach the bidder, asking if he would sell me one of the MK2 kits for $20. He agrees. Jim and his wife head home, but not before reporting that they snagged a Super Off Road 3-player game, an Asteroids for a friend, and one of those 1950's pinballs Bill and I were admiring. Bill himself won two auctions, a Ninja Gaiden with a dead monitor for $20, and some obscure oddball game called Igmo for $65 that looks like it's in near museum quality condition. Bill finds a trucker to transport the games to his house (it's on the trucker's way home to Richmond), and I wrap up the deal for the MK 2 kit.

It's quite late once the games are at Bill's house. I hang out for a few minutes, while we check out Igmo on the net and discover that it's a true rarity. There's no record of it anywhere, and only a handful of people have even heard of it. Funny how Bill intended to use the Igmo for parts, but no he feels obligated to keep this game around and make information on it available to other collectors. I suppose if he wants usable parts, he can salvage from the Ninja Gaiden. (As long as he doesn't need a monitor!) I leave, and begin the long drive home to Woodbridge.

Arcade auctioning really is an incredible experience. You get to see many favorites, new and old, and possibly play something you've never seen before. The excitement of one of these arcade denizens possibly coming home with you really is an unforgettable feeling. And when you complete a bid, and you look at the machine that is now yours... Well, don't be surprised if you feel like a proud papa (or mamma) about your new toy!

I recommend going to an arcade auction whenever one pops up in your area. Be sure to keep a limit on your spending, and figure out approximately how much space you have available in your home. There's nothing worse than getting a game and then realizing you have no place to put it. I believe the tarp covered Gremlin/Sega Carnival machine on my back porch would agree with that last statement wholeheartedly!

*Visit **www.superauctions.com** to find auctions in your area.*

*Auction photos courtesy Mark Davidson. To see more photos and auction prices visit his website at **www.basementarcade.com.***

ACTIONTWINKLE

International Man of Bidding

by Colin Mahan

I am Actiontwinkle. I am a soldier in the greatest war humankind has ever fought: World Wide Web War 1, or WWWW1, or WWWWI if you're a historian. It's the web war to end all web wars, and it might succeed, considering the whole internet is folding. I wasn't drafted; I volunteered, although at the time I thought I was just filling out a questionnaire about my favorite teen pop band (O-Town). Now that I'm a part of this war I can never turn back, mainly because I owe creditors. You see, Actiontwinkle has a weakness, and it's called 'classic games.'

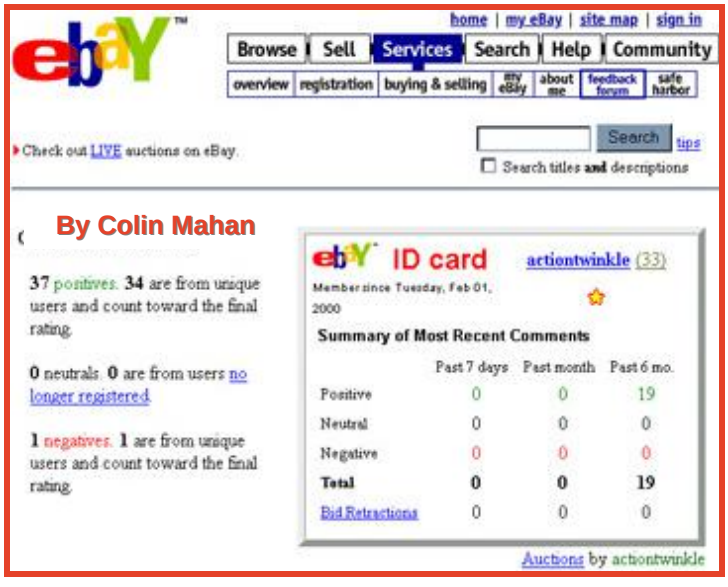
I am on the battlefield, which we dog-faces call "eBay." I crouch motionless in my foxhole between the "Photo and Electronics" and "Everything Else." I am ready to strike with lightning speed and deadly spend-thriftiness. I will emerge victorious, and poorer.

Time is my enemy, but at the same time it is my best friend (which reminds me a lot of my second grade pal Andy Jiles; he was my 'best' friend, but he would always talk smack about me at the drop of a hat). Time ticks away at exactly the same speed as it usually does. In short, time is an invariable cosmic force that doesn't change according to my wishes. I have trouble understanding this, but I don't understand a lot of things.

My resolve strengthens as I dab some onto the stain in the carpet. It's important to test a small spot for color correctness. As I wait for the Resolve to work, I daydream of revenge against silly names: I will outfox GizmoGuy. I will outfox NerdYahoo428. I will crush the life from JoyStikACE35 (sunglasses). My Resolve smells good and it really gets those high traffic areas.

I will win this battle at all costs up to 50 dollars; after that I'm finished. There have been some cuts in the military budget: I recently lost my job and didn't find it until I spotted it in a security camera video of a bank robbery on "America's Most Wanted." Losing my job has put a serious crimp in my eBay surfing. It used to be that I could go to work, surf the web, put off my assignments until the last minute, hastily construct a sub-par version of something resembling 'work,' and earn enough to live comfortably while still wasting a sensible amount of money on luxuries like Vic Morrow head shots from the 1978 Japanese "Star Wars" rip-off "Message From Space." Now, I'm looking for a job, and in order to impress possible bosses I've got to get things done in a timely fashion. It's these types of bitter pills that make war such hell.

I think back over this war. It started when I became one of the rich young dot com people, although I was a writer so I was a poor young dot com person. I worked in an industry that hadn't even existed when most of my favorite video games were made, and since it existed in a circular nether-world where reality seemed to have no meaning, I felt I should start throwing my money away. After stumbling upon eBay one day, I created a new mission to distract me from my 'job': I decided to liberate classic games from their oppressors.



Some games are easier to free than others, some opponents are craftier, and some descriptions more meandering and poorly written. Most of the time the games are affordable, and when I say 'affordable' I mean 'exorbitantly priced out of my range by idiots who overbid.'

I remember the 'Battle of the Planet Patrol for the Atari 2600.' This game was a pet of mine back in '82, after I read a review of it in "Electronic Games." The review mentioned that the background cycled through a whole day before your grandmother came into the room and said you looked like an imbecile with your headphones on, mouthing the words to Motley Crue as you twiddled your joystick. This was very exciting to me, since up until that time only "Enduro" had dared tackle the 'day to night' quandary. I placed a bid and foolishly left it unattended while I shaved my roommates back and fell asleep in his piles of lustrous hair. The next morning I awoke to a gruesome "You've been outbid" email and the sight of a ransacked "My eBay" page that detailed in bloody red characters the folly of my campaign. Never again would I be able to relive the family closeness of my youth.

Then there was 'The Revenge of Montezuma's Revenge,' a bloody six day dig-in that saw my nerves tattered and my bids hammered by the forces of JarJarBideoGames. I learned from my past mistakes, and I hunted the game slowly, watching the others bid too early and biding my time as I attempted to 'catch 'em all' on my Color Game Boy. At the last second, my computer froze and I sat helplessly watching the Microsoft Explorer world spin as the clock ran out and my proxy bids were cut to ribbons.

Finally there was the most frustrating battle of my service career: 'The Ballad of Auction H.E.R.O.' Activision's HERO was one of the best games ever for the 2600, and I spent many a summer day playing it, slowly falling out of touch with the rest of my peers, isolating myself and not developing social skills, becoming the person I am today: a fool who still thinks Stallone was cool with those reflective sunglasses in "Cobra." Long have I searched for HERO, ever since I had a two-kegger in high school when my parents went to Tahiti, and some screwjob stole most of my videogames and someone had sex in my bed. If I could just find HERO, I felt that it would erase the trauma of drunkenly sleeping in someone else's sex. Alas, my therapy was to not to be, because again I was thwarted by someone even dumber than me, who had more time and money to waste.

Ah well, the life of a soldier is rough, but it's worth it. If I can be as greedy as I always fantasized about being when I pored over the back of video game magazines, then it all makes sense. If I can be an anal-retentive completionist who has one more list to alphabetize, then my life has meaning. If I can relive my childhood and enforce upon my reality a bubble of mental non-aging, then it all has paid off.

I am Actiontwinkle. Watch for me on the battlefield…as soon as I get a job.

CGM

Lost Arcade Classic

DANGER ZONE

by kyle snyder

As a general rule, when I select a game to spotlight for my "Lost Arcade Classic" articles, I focus on games of the late 70's or early 80's. Those are the games from the "golden era" of arcades that we all remember with such fondness. But when I was thinking about what game to cover in this war-themed issue, I thought of a game released in the mid 80's that I never even got to play until the early 90's, yet it's still a justifiable "lost arcade classic." That game is Danger Zone by Cinematronics.

Cinematronics is recognized primarily for two important innovations in the arcade field. In 1977, they released Space Wars, the first game to use Larry Rosenthal's invention of vector graphics. Its success would pave the way for later hits such as Battlezone, Tempest, and Star Wars, which all used vector monitors to produce their memorable visuals. After several years in the early 80's of mediocre arcade releases, Cinematronics released the first fully animated laserdisc game, Dragon's Lair. Using beautiful animation from Don Bluth, an engaging storyline and unique game play, Dragon's Lair was the most successful game of the summer of 1983. However, the market was beginning to crumble for all arcade game manufacturers, and hit games were becoming few and far between. Danger Zone, released in 1986, was Cinematronics' third milestone in arcade gaming, yet because of the tepid arcade environment of the time, it went virtually unnoticed.

The gameplay is a military simulation at its finest. The player assumes the role of a nameless gunner in charge of defending his desert base from an onslaught of enemy aggressors. You are perched on a hill, looking down on the bunkers, radar dishes, and missile launch pads that decorate your base. In the distance, a mountain range reflects rays of sun off its craggy surfaces. Suddenly, your radar screen lights up with bright blips heading straight for you! A look to the sky reveals five tiny dark spots that quickly enlarge into a squadron of enemy fighters! You fire at the invaders and are successful in turning three of the planes into fiery piles of wreckage. But the two planes on the edge of the formation escape and arc upward, safely out of the reach of your bullets. No time to watch them; in comes ANOTHER squadron of planes! And this one is accompanied by a helicopter sending missiles down at your friends! Quick, turn, aim, and FIRE!!!! The copter erupts in a brilliant explosion, but those fighters are closing in fast! BLAM!!! KAPOW!!! BOOM!!!! KABLAM!!!! You knock out four of the five planes, but the escaping fighter succeeds in dropping several bombs. You pick two of them out of the sky, but the third hits its target, one of your base's launch pads! Smoldering craters begin to outnumber the ordinance at your base as the enemies overwhelm you. Despite your best efforts, the enemy soon obliterates the majority of your installation. Just as you think maybe you should run and save your own skin, you see the unthinkable... deadly ICBMs rising over the surface, heading right for you. You aim, and detonate five of the deadly nuclear weapons before the rest rain down, and... well, let's just say you won't be seeing your wife and kids anytime soon.

Okay. So what? Sounds like a version of Missile Command on speed, right? Sort of. But that's not all. Consider the cabinet design.

Cabinet design? What's that got to do with anything? A lot, my friend, a lot. Cinematronics designed a machine quite unlike any game in arcades up until that point or since. The machine has a very heavy and narrow base on which the coin door is mounted. Out of the center of this base extends a thick tube, upon which the monitor and control panel is mounted. The control panel protrudes out from the lower front of the monitor and features what appear to be two M.A.C.H. 3 style flight sticks. Each stick has two front-mounted thumb-controlled fire buttons, and one traditional trigger style firing mechanism. At first, the game looks quite out of place. No marquee, no decorative screen glass or side art; it may look rather bland upon first glance. But once you grasp the joysticks… Yep! Those joysticks are stationary! They don't move themselves... they move THE WHOLE SCREEN!!! In a phenomenal work of engineering, the good folks at Cinematronics created a game where you grip the sticks, and move THE ENTIRE UPPER HALF OF THE CABINET!!! Furthermore, when you swing the monitor in any direction, the image it displays perfectly follows your movements, giving a true "first person" perspective as to what it must be like to be that lonely gunner on the hill. Tilting it up or down reveals further expanses of the sky or a better view of your base. I imagine a heavy duty spring or perhaps something resembling a car's hydraulics is supporting the monitor inside of the thick "neck tube" that connects it to the base.

When you start a game and the first blips show on the radar, it is relatively easy to stay facing front and down all five attackers with some well placed shots. But when the action speeds up, and you become aware that a helicopter is laying waste to your bunkers, you will literally LEAP to the left, to bring it into view as soon as possible, and destroy it! Then, you dance back to the right, trying to obliterate another squadron of fighters before they unleash their deadly cargoes. Depressing a thumb button sends heat seeking missiles screaming towards the enemy craft. DIRECT HIT! You may have to use these things more often! Pretty soon, you find you are breaking a sweat, as this swivel monitor succeeds in drawing you into the action unlike any other conventional game. The panic factor sets in, as your base lies in ruins, and the nuclear missiles scream over the mountains... ARGGGHHHHH!!!!!!!! And with a violent explosion, your world is no more. Until you insert another quarter that is.

Danger Zone presents the player with a realistic depiction of a situation all too familiar to us survivors of the eighties - the threat of nuclear war. By mastering the game, you can destroy the planes and choppers before they do much damage to your base. This allows you to complete multiple attack waves, earning bonuses that allow your base to rebuild destroyed sites, much like Missile Command's bonus cities. Eventually, though, even the best player will find himself at the mercy of the unknown enemy Russians???Terrorists??? Corporate middle-management???), unable to prevent the inevitable.

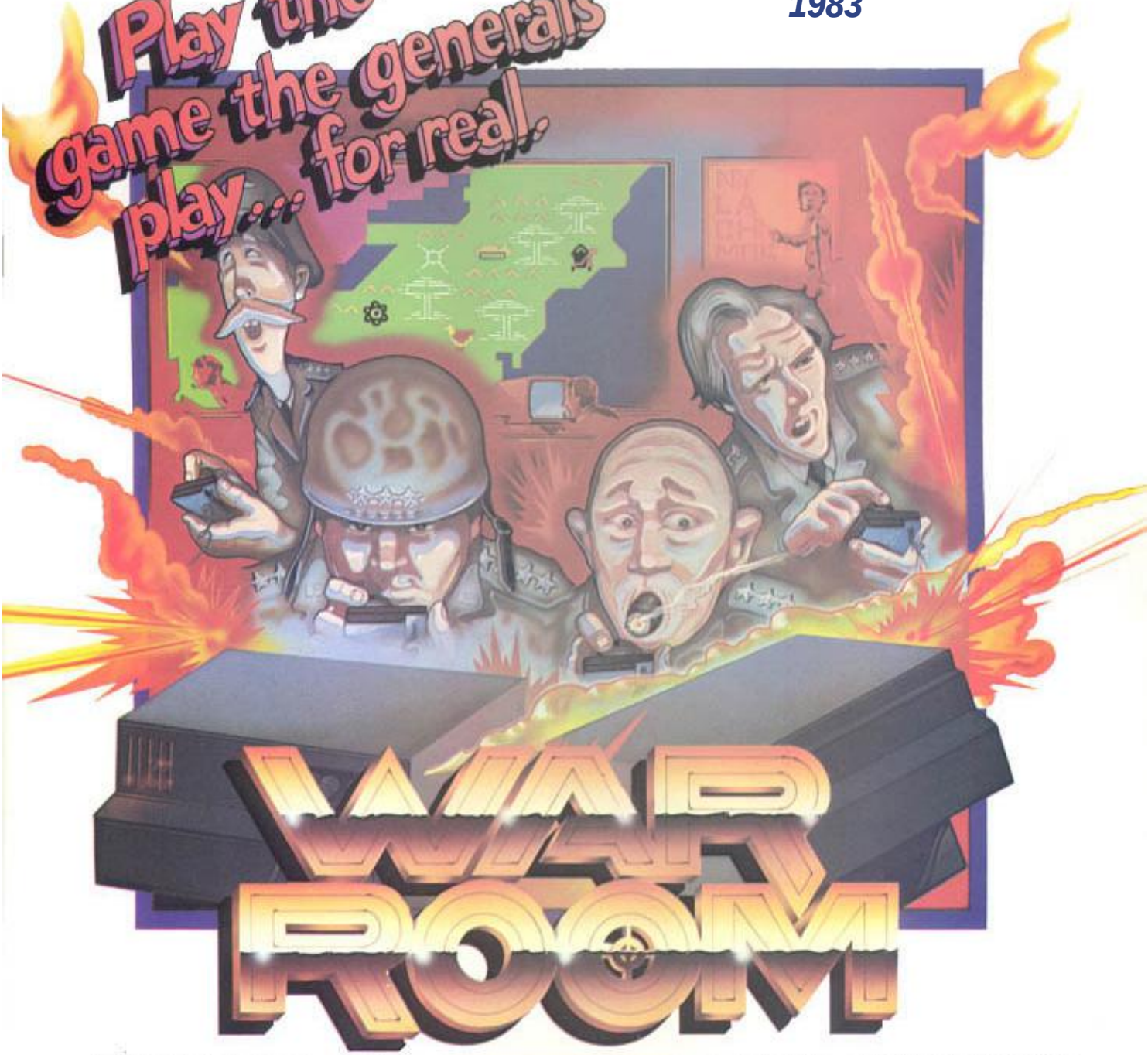
I used to play this game religiously at the late Galaxy 1 arcade in LaPlata, MD in the early 90's. The arcade owner wisely placed a wide berth around this machine, as energetic players could find themselves stepping on others' toes, or slamming into other players if they were not given room. Danger Zone certainly gives you a workout, and could be included in an all video games exercise regimen. (along with any game that uses the "Power Pad" on the 8-bit Nintendo, and the frenetic trackball rolling necessary to succeed in Atari's arcade Marble Madness.)

Danger Zone must have attracted a loyal following, because the Leland Corporation released a sequel in 1988 entitled Viper. Cinematronics was absorbed by Leland in the mid 80's, sometime after Danger Zone's release.) Viper featured enhanced graphics, the option to purchase better weaponry, and a seat mounted several feet away from the swivel monitor. Although I never saw a Viper machine in person, I can only assume that the seat would have reduced the energetic "fun factor" of the original concept.

Danger Zone, for obvious reasons, was never ported to any home system. It can be played on your PC as a downloadable ROM for MAME, but it just can't replicate the sensations of excitement and fear that the swivel monitor could invoke. Kudos to Cinematronics on another excellent game that will now hopefully get the respect and recognition it deserves

CGM

Play the game the generals play... for real.



Feel the goose bumps on your neck begin to rise as you take your seat in front of the video monitor. The situation pictured before your eyes is critical. Actual enemy nuclear attack on your most important cities and natural resources has begun.

Only *you* can determine the best strategic defense of the nation. Only *you* can effectively repel the enemy attack.

But the situation worsens. As you're attempting to rebuild your cities and keep production of goods and services going, you pick up enemy spies lurking within your midst on your video close-up monitor. Can you effectively deal with them...even as more enemy missiles are approaching?

Your time is running out.

It's WAR ROOM. The new high-technology Probe 2000 strategy game for the ColecoVision™ game system. The game that's so realistic, generals might even play it.

Isn't it time you tested your skills?

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Classic Ad Courtesy Ken Jong.
Scanned from Electronic Games Magazine, October, 1983

PlayStation Collectibles?

by Mark Androvich

Before the advent of the Internet, people searching for unusual collectibles were out of luck. Stamp and coin collectors had their magazines and newspapers, and it was easy to find books on Pez dispensers, G.I. Joe, Barbie, tin lunch boxes, baseball cards, and Hot Wheels. If you collected something out of the ordinary, however, you were limited to searching flea markets and placing ads in the newspaper.

Thanks to the miracle of modern technology (and our friends at eBay), you can auction off that Space:1999 Commander Koenig doll with the bell bottoms or locate that 1968 map of Disneyland you've always wanted. As someone who grew up with videogames in the 1970's and 80's, I have spent a fair amount of time scouring thrift stores and swap meets looking for games and peripherals for long-dead systems. Thanks to the Internet, I have been able to obtain many sought-after titles. The bad news is that nearly everything collectible-even videogames-garners a heavy price. If you are only casually interested in that first edition copy of "Pride and Prejudice," for example, you won't likely be able to outbid a fanatic with the screen name "lizbennet@aol.com."

I am certain that the PlayStation will also become collectible some day. Scoff if you must, but this isn't too far-fetched. Children and teenagers eventually grow up and develop both feelings of nostalgia and a disposable income. The PSX is the first system that some young kids have ever played, and therefore when they are older they might start looking for a few PlayStation systems and titles for "old times' sake." For all you budding capitalists out there now realizing that there is money to be made, how can you figure out what items will be the most sought after?

Using current developments as a guide, I'm providing you with my predictions on what may turn out to be collectors items of the future. Clip this article out, start buying up the items now, and get ready to sell them for four times the amount you paid... provided you can keep them in good condition for the next 10-15 years!

SYSTEMS

Most classic systems are not very collectible in and of themselves. Only those systems which were prototypes or released in very small quantities are sought after. The rest are sold to be used for spare parts, especially for the power cords. Unlike the very early consoles, most systems have unique power supplies that cannot be mixed and matched. Just try and find an AC adapter for an Atari 5200 or 7800 at Radio Shack, for example. Some people also purchase spare systems to be used as back-ups for the day when their Odyssey2 becomes a shiny silver doorstop.

As for the PlayStation, it has been redesigned several times in its life span. The oldest unit, with the parallel port and audio/video outputs, might be the most sought-after. But then again, due to problems with overheating, it is unlikely that many of these units will still work in the future. My guess is that the first batch of Dual Shock systems, with the built-in kaleidoscope program and parallel port for Game Shark usage, will be the most common. The blue "debugging stations" provided to developers and media will perhaps be more valuable, but these, too, are subject to the skipping problems and few who own them will be likely to part with one. A nice collectible system might be the Net Yarouze PlayStation; the high price and limited demand for them make such systems rare even today.

I am certain that the PlayStation will also become collectible some day. Scoff if you must, but this isn't too far-fetched.

GAMES

There are three main types of valuable classic videogames: rare games, prototypes, and special editions. When it comes to rare games, there is an inverse relationship between the popularity of the game and its value. It makes sense, actually. Since Asteroids and Space Invaders were such big hits, it follows that Atari made a lot of those cartridges. With such a large supply, the value is extremely low. On the other hand, a game such as Chase the Chuckwagon-which was a giveaway from Purina dog food and never sold at retail-is in short supply and thus can fetch (pun intended) more money. Games that were never released at all but exist as prototypes, such as Save Mary, The A-Team, or Tempest are also highly-prized collectibles. Finally, some games were altered after being released-names were changed, hidden initials were removed, or glitches were fixed. The pre-altered games may also be collectible, since generally they are in shorter supply.

How does this apply to the PlayStation? Well, you can expect that your Gran Turismo and your Tomb Raider won't be as valuable as your Motor Toon Gran Prix and your Deathtrap Dungeon. It has nothing to do with how good the games are, but whether they are common or rare. It's hard to name specific titles at this point, but you can be sure that the most valuable games will be the ones which sold the least number of copies - meaning the crappiest titles. Ironic, isn't it?

The PlayStation had its share of games which were never released for some reason or another. The unknown variable here is the ease of copying such games, since they are on CD's rather than ROM cartridge boards. Thrill Kill, for example, was an ultra-violent fighting game that EA decided to drop, but there are enough copies out there floating around that it is relatively easy to obtain one. Games such as Rattlesnake Red and Global Domination, on the other hand, aren't so accessible. The problem is that, thanks to the fact that many people own computers with CD-ROM drives, copies can be made easily and cheaply. I therefore don't expect PlayStation prototypes to ever command the same prices that cartridge prototypes do.

And yes, the PlayStation also has its share of altered games. Remember the fiasco with EA's Tiger Woods containing a hidden South Park video (playable only on a PC)? The video was removed from later releases-voila! Instant collectible! Some "Greatest Hits" versions of games-notably Jet Moto 2, Soviet Strike, and Lost World-add features, functions, and levels not found in the regular releases of those games. Not long ago, a brouhaha erupted over the use of a "bandito" character in Toy Story 2. Activision announced it would remove the offending character from further versions of the game. Once again, a collectible is born! Even as I write this, I have seen two different covers of Star Wars: Jedi Power Battles: a solid black background (Toys R Us) and a comic illustration (everywhere else). The game is the same in both cases. Terrible, but now we have a potential

collectible.

In the last years of the Atari 2600's lifespan, the console was popular in Europe. There were many games released there that never found their way to the states. Problem is, as the games were designed for use with PAL televisions, even if you managed to obtain one, you would have problems using it with an NTSC television. As the Sega Saturn died out in America, Japan was the only place you could still find new games for it. Thus, these foreign titles became hard-to-find collectibles.

The availability of mod-chips and import game dealers means that U.S. gamers probably won't have a hard time locating PlayStation games released only in Europe or Japan. Still, they may yet become collectible as conversation pieces.

Finally, don't forget the draw of game packaging! Sony games have been released in several different types of packaging-long cardboard boxes, long clear plastic boxes, black plastic molded boxes, and CD jewel boxes. Even the jewel boxes have variations-some games which came in a double-sized case were later released in a single-sized case. The odds are good that someone will be looking for a particular variation.

PERIPHERALS

Peripherals are valuable in the world of classic gaming primarily because they are no longer on the market. If you break your Atari 5200 joystick in 1999, you can't obtain a replacement from Best Buy can you? Some peripherals are also valuable because they never caught on with the public, such as the Amiga Joyboard or the Mattel Power Glove. Many were quite expensive when brand new, but as the systems phased out, enterprising collectors purchased lots of boxed joysticks and paddle controllers waiting for the chance to sell them again.

Sony's use of a similar Dual Shock Analog controller with the PlayStation 2 may change the collectible market somewhat. If your original PlayStation controller breaks in the year 2005, you may still be able to buy a replacement for it at the store. Most likely, it will be the funky-shaped controllers and gizmos from third-parties that will be in demand. Peripherals such as the Sony mouse, the ASCII one-handed RPG controller, the NeGCon, the specialized Biohazzard controller, and the Nyko trackball, which weren't supported by a lot of software, might become collectibles. The non-dual shock analog controller, released for a short period of time, is a similar hard to find peripheral that might command a good price.

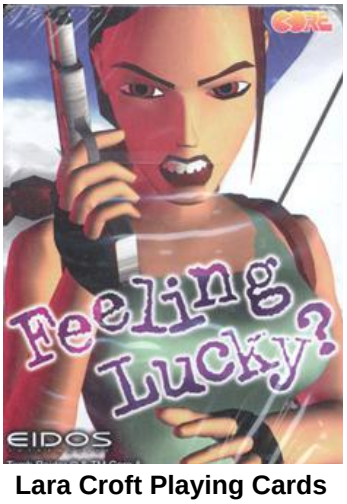
MEDIA

What do you do when you finish an issue of Classic Gamer Magazine? (We know--

you encase it in plastic and carefully archive it, right?) Older readers might keep and take good care of magazines, but younger readers toss them around, cut them up, and eventually trash them. If it weren't for World War II paper drives and mothers throwing them out, for example, old comic books would be a dime a dozen. My Dad still regrets putting those 1950's Mickey Mantle baseball cards in the spokes of his bicycle. For similar reasons, many classic videogame magazines are in demand. We were kids and didn't know enough to save them at the time! Which are the most collectible? First issues, last issues, alternate cover issues, and fan-club publications not available to the general public such as Atari Age, Atarian, Activisions, or Imagic's Numb Thumb Club News.

Many of the big magazines today-EGM, NextGen, GamePro- have been around for quite a few years and are well-established. As long as videogames continue to be a profitable form of entertainment, these magazines will likely continue to exist in some shape or form in the future. Think about holding onto premiere issues (#1), anniversary issues (#50, #100), or last issues just as before. Other issues aren't likely to be as sought after, unless they contain something unusual-such as Diehard Gamefan's slur-filled Japanese-bashing College Football review in 1996 (long story-don't ask!).

Although Sony does not have a fan-club print publication, it does have the PlayStation



Lara Croft Playing Cards

Underground. These CDs are available via subscription only, not to the general public, and therefore may be more collectible in the future. Again, one uncertainty is the ease of copying CDs, thus increasing the supply and reducing the price.

RELATED MERCHANDISE

When Pac-Man came along, the marketing machine went into full gear. There were lunchboxes, records, card games, board games, a Saturday morning cartoon, phones, dolls, T-shirts, key chains, bed sheets, and more. Ditto with characters such as Q*Bert, Ms. Pac-Man, Donkey Kong, and Mario. As the industry grew, companies also started to publicize their games to the press and the public at large with cardboard cut-outs, posters, and all sorts of gimmicks.

Some popular games aren't character-based (Gran Turismo, and Madden for example), but there are still many icons from the PlayStation generation of videogames-Lara Croft, Crash Bandicoot, Solid Snake, Croc, Gex, Spyro, and so forth. Not all of them have spawned action figures or other non-game merchandise, but many have. If kept sealed in the packaging, who knows what a Meryl action figure from Metal Gear Solid might sell for years from now? Of course, you would have to deny yourself the fun of playing with the toy yourself, so you might have to buy two of everything. And, if you've ever been to E3, you know that gimmicky items are quite plentiful. I'm looking at a foam beverage cooler that says "In Odd We Trust," a miniature football helmet with the GameDay 2000 logo on it, and a CTR key chain even as I write this. They aren't leaving my office any time soon, but someday they just might be the object of someone else's search.

A quick search on eBay will show you that there is a large collector's market for pre-Nintendo videogame systems, cartridges, magazines, and related merchandise. The mere existence of an annual Classic Gaming Expo (www.cgexpo.com) should leave no doubt that there are people out there interested in this stuff-myself included! We are already starting to see growing demand for original Nintendo items, and as the next generation ages, it is only a matter of time before the PlayStation takes its place in an antique store near you.

CGM

This article originally appeared in PSExtreme magazine and is being republished by permission.

So it's 1980, and we're all playing *Missile Command,* that brutally brilliant game by Atari featuring strategy, sacrifice, death and destruction. You know, according to legend, the game was originally going to be called *Armageddon,* but the marketing folks at Atari were worried that *Armageddon* was an egregiously multi-syllabic term synonymous with mass-destruction (i.e. - they thought the word was too big and obscure to be a game title).

But what was the game *about?* Of that, there was absolutely no doubt. Soviet ICBMs raining death from the sky. And hey, even though those of us who grew up with Atari were too young to remember the bomb shelter days of the 1950s and 60s, we *were* around to witness Ronald Reagan's verbally-shoot-from-the-hip presidency - the days of calling the Soviets an "evil empire." The early 1980s were the days of *Missile Command,* TV and magazine speculative articles on nuclear winter, and movies like *Testament* and *The Day After.*

It was still enough, in other words, to scare the piss out of you.

And then Atari brought *Missile Command* home to the VCS. But this time, gone were the Russkies' gleaming, screaming needles of atomic death, replaced with - get this! - **alien projectiles**. Now, in truth, it was still the same game, and I didn't play it any less for the change in its already-paper-thin "storyline." But imagine my disgust when I pick up the PlayStation version of *Missile Command* in 1999, only to find that, rather than Soviet ICBMs (hell, even an unspecified Middle Eastern country's ICBMs would do), I'm *still* shooting down alien projectiles.

'Scuse me while I alien projectile-vomit here. This fundamental change to *Missile Command* has always bothered me.

I had hoped, when buying the newfangled update of Atari's Cold War classic, that perhaps enough time had passed that the game's original premise - the very same one that, by all accounts, had given the programmer of the original arcade game wake-up-in-a-cold-sweat nightmares - would be restored. Not so. It's still a tremendously fun game, the new graphics are fantastic while maintaining the feel of the original, but I think Hasbro/Atari copped out on this one.

Why am I so adamant that these missiles should be from across an ocean rather than from across the vastness of space? Because it makes the game *scarier.* In this day and age, manufacturers don't seem to have a problem with that.

We see lots of games where one empties endless clips of ammo into evil foes, watching their pixellated blood spill out onto the bit-mapped floor. But why are we afraid to make *Missile Command* about Soviet ICBMs? Are we, perhaps, being just a little too ultra-politically-correct here?

Or could it be that, bearing in mind the recent destruction of a Russian nuclear submarine under mysterious circumstances, along with the subsequent refusals of U.S. assistance and other odd behaviors displayed by Russia's government, we're afraid of jinxing *perestroika* and kick-starting a new Cold War?

The "alien missile" gag is an alarming cop-out. Even the *Command & Conquer* series of computer games wasn't afraid - at least initially - to make its premise that of an alternate history of an all-out U.S.-Soviet war. But *Missile Command* existed during the Cold War, and for the sin of thrusting incoming nukes and mushroom clouds before the eyes of impressionable kids everywhere - in their own living rooms, no less! - it was sentenced to be forever watered down with a cheesy storyline.

My only consolation is that it's still fun to shoot down all those missiles until the inevitable end…

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Teach Your Children Well — Part 2

By Tom Zjaba

Last issue, we spoke about teaching the youth of today about the history of video games. For this segment, we are going to get a little more personal. This time we are going to talk about what you as a parent can do to keep the significance of classic games alive with your children. If we cannot teach our own children, what chance do we have with anyone else's kids?

I know you are thinking that you know your kid best and don't need any advice from someone in a classic gaming magazine. And you may right, you may have all the answers and will give your kid the solid foundation to truly appreciate the classic games and the impact they had on the market (and still have on today's games). If so, then move onto another article and ignore this altogether. For the rest of you, there is one very important thing to keep in mind when teaching your kids about classic video games. Anyone who guessed "how to play forever on Pac-Man," grab a dunce cap and go to the back of the class. If you answered "a route of all the best thrift stores," then you also need to get to the back of the class. The answer is "not to belittle the new games and systems." Nothing will turn your child off classic games quicker than by telling him/her how much better they are than the new systems. Remember that they are going to have friends and most likely these friends will have new systems. Do you want your child to become the laughing stock by telling these kids how much better games on the Atari are than the latest system? Sure you may think so and your child may too, but I highly doubt his/her friends will. So don't force this mindset on your child; let him make up his own mind.

The best way to build an appreciation of classic games is at an early age. The best game to start a child on is probably Pong. It is simple, fairly fast paced, and kids seem to love it. You can easily teach anyone to play and it will help build that much needed hand/eye coordination. Just make sure to

not cream them as you may discourage them at a very early age. Once they get the idea of how to play, let them win once in a while. Just don't make it look too fake; kids are a lot smarter than you think.

Once they graduate from Pong University, they are ready for the next level. Other good games for the preschool set are games like Pac-Man, Space Invaders, and just about any other game that is simple. The best thing to keep in mind is the less they have to do, the better off they will be. Pac-Man is good because it just involves a joystick. Space Invaders adds a button, but since you are only moving back and forth, they will not get confused. The thing to keep in mind is that they are young and new to video games. They haven't had a lifetime of game playing like you have, so patience is the most important thing you can offer. That and encouragement. Get ready to show your child over and over how to best use the energizers or how the Space Invaders' bullets are deadly. Make sure to praise them when they finally complete that first level and give them words of encouragement when don't get past the first level for the 15th time. It is very important to make it fun and nothing ruins an experience than an impatient and frustrated parent. Don't worry, they will figure it out.

As they grow older and begin to play newer games (it's going to happen, so just get used to it), you can give them little lessons on classic games have influenced new games. You can show them how a side scrolling platform game can be traced back to Pitfall or how that fancy galaxy hopping game has roots in Star Raiders. This way they can enjoy the games of today and still have an appreciation for the role that classic games played in the development of the industry and how they still influence the games of today. This way your kid can enjoy the classics with you and not be mocked by his friends. Who knows, he may even convert a few of his friends into classic game fans!

CGM

Equal Time:
A Reader's Response to Last Issue's Damien Quicksilver's SNES Article

Defending the SNES
by Ed Emmerling

The Super Nintendo Entertainment System is often criticized for its lack of great games and inferiority in comparison to its rival, the Sega Genesis. Over the past 4 years the SNES has slowly become one of the most misunderstood and under appreciated systems this side of the Turbo 16. Nintendo and others produced quality SNES titles throughout the system's lifespan, and I often found myself saying that there wasn't a bad game in the library. Naturally, reality and a few hours with Bill Lambier's Combat Basketball convinced me that this was definitely not true. While definitely displaying more than a few duds, the SNES could proudly boast quality titles in every genre of gaming.

Super Mario World could be the best version of Mario to date. It had the re-playability that Mario 64 lacked. It had incredible depth, which Mario 2 lacked. The graphics were light years ahead of the NES, and the number of objects on the screen seemed limitless. The original Super Mario and Super Mario 3 could arguably be considered better, but the lack of a save mode in Mario 3 and the simplicity of the original put both slightly behind Super Mario World in my book. Another classic early title was Pilot Wings. While the early training missions were simple, playing all the way through was very difficult. The tasks got to the point of near impossibility, and in order to defeat the game, you had to develop a certain level of skill, accompanied with a generous dose of good luck. The two helicopter missions were certainly a worthwhile bonus for completing the training sessions.

Two other great first generation titles were SimCity and Super Tennis. While SimCity was not nearly as good as its PC counterpart, it did provide a nice diversion and a new genre of game for the home console. It also spawned ports of everything from Sim Earth to Sim Ant in the SNES's lifetime. Super Tennis provided a great tennis game that was not bested for look and feel until Sega's Virtua Tennis came out last year.

Later titles that belong among some of the all time best include Legend of Zelda : A Link to the Past, which was incredible in both the size of the game and the quality of the graphics and gameplay; Donkey Kong Country, which was not only mind blowing in its graphics, but also provided mini-games and an amazing platformer.

A great 2 player game to note is Faceball 2000, which was one of the earliest split screen battle games on a home console. There was no better feeling than seeing the back of your opponent's big yellow head in your sites, and no worse feeling than slowly turning around into a giant smiling face about to blast you to pieces. Super Mario Kart, which provided 2 player split screen fun that was revolutionary in its time is still fun today. Also, Tetris/Dr. Mario is another great 2 player game. In addition to the above, some very good RPG's such as FFIII, Super Mario RPG, and Chrono Trigger were all there on the SNES. Also great fighters such as Killer Instinct, the Street Fighter Series and Mortal Kombat II and III were all available for the SNES.

Some interesting imports you may want to check out if you're into the emulation scene are High School Soccer, Super Mario Excitebike, and several Dragon Ball Z games. Other games that deserve at least a mention include Harvest Moon, Star Fox, and Hal's Hole in One Golf (an early title that was very addictive if not very deep).

While its early library lacked the depth of Genesis and several titles were better on the Genesis (most notably NHL '93 and Mortal Kombat), the SNES definitely proved to be the system with the most staying power. If you are looking for a system that can deliver great games in every genre from fighting to sims, you need look no further than the SNES.

NAMCOMUSEUM

Sega Dreamcast.

by Kyle Snyder

I'm torn. When I recently purchased Namco Museum for the Sega Dreamcast, I sat down with a pen and paper to take notes on this classic compilation. How close did they get to the arcade games? Are there any detracting peculiarities? And then I was faced with a revelation. I am terribly critical of any modern system's attempt to duplicate the classics.

I'm not talking so much about the brand new remakes of things like Frogger or Centipede, but these compilation discs that do their best to mimic the classic arcade games of days gone by. I tend to immediately focus on the negative, noting superficial qualities and details that wouldn't hinder the average fan's enjoyment of the game.

As a result, while reading this article, you may feel that I'm being picky when I mention that a sound isn't correct, or a character looks a little "off."

But then I had to look at Namco Museum in a different light. Is it fun? Does it duplicate the feel and essence of the classics?

The answer to that question, is a "shout-it-from-the-mountaintops" YES!

Everybody knows the games offered on this disc. Pac-Man, Ms.Pac-Man, Galaxian, Galaga, Dig Dug, and Pole Position. The first four were released stateside by Bally/Midway, and the last two were introduced to us by Atari. All six, however, were developed and released in Japan by Namco (with one exception I will discuss later...).

I will say again that these games are VERY close to their arcade counterparts. In the case of Galaga, I could notice NO flaws whatsoever. The others have a few details that seem overlooked. In the Pac-Man games, for instance, the ghosts don't look quite right. It seems they have pointier heads than the rounded domes we are used to playing. It is likely it's a matter of just one or two extra pixels, but it doesn't seem right. The opening music to Ms.Pac-Man seems tinny somehow, and the sound effect after eating a ghost, when its eyes are speeding back to the monster house, is a little off as well. But other than that, the games are dead on and offer the same mazes, fruits, and strategy as the originals.

It seems strange that no speed-up option is included on Pac-Man or Ms.Pac-Man. Because of a late 80's post-market speed-up chip marketed to arcade owners, nearly every Pac or Ms.Pac arcade machine you see these days has the golden gobbler traveling at twice the speed of the ghosts. In fact, many people prefer this and seem to have forgotten what the original speed was like. I can't help thinking some folks may be disappointed by the versions on this disc for that reason.

"DADDY!!!, the Ms.Pac-Man down at Pizza Hut moves faster than THIS!!!!"

Galaxian and Galaga are both excellent ports of the classic machines. From the high pitched squeals of the Galaxians peeling out of formation, to the distinctive death sounds of the Galagans, the sounds are all perfect. Galaga is going to be the bigger draw to most players, what with its double fire power options, challenging stages, and aliens that split into an attack force of three later on in the game. It's interesting to note that instead of the "A" button, players can use the triggers to fire at the cosmic beasties, which does add a certain extra degree of satisfaction when blowing them away. In fact, the only flaw I could find was in Galaxian, at the end of a wave when only two or three aliens are flying around in that hyper accelerated "frenzy." The panic-inducing sound effects are supposed to continue until you destroy the final Galaxian and clear the level. Here, the panic sounds are heard only for a few seconds and then stop. After that, only the sound of your missiles firing at the winged monsters resonates. But that's not too big of a detraction, considering that everything else is done spot on.

Namco has also given us authentic arcade screen glass artwork to surround the screen on three of the four Bally/Midway games. But it isn't the artwork we recognize. The Pac games are surrounded by odd cartoony Pac-people doing goofy things like sticking their tongues out and pointing, or squinting their eyes and punching. Galaga features a generic green design taken from the bottom third of the Galaga marquee logo. These were probably the authentic screen glasses from the machines released in Japan, and to get the American artwork would have taken some legal wrangling, but to an American purist, this artwork seems very out of place.

Dig Dug is another excellent port. The game play, sounds, and graphics are all dead on as far as I can tell. The only thing that keeps this from being 100% flawless is a strange scrolling screen. The screen will scroll vertically to show either the top or bottom 10% of the screen when you approach them. Why? All the other games on this disc (with the exception of Pole Position) were originally played on the same 19" vertical color monitors. If they could get the proportions of all the other games right, what made Dig Dug such a challenge? Namco does provide us with the option to remove the scrolling, but then the bottom line of dirt is off the bottom of your TV screen!!!! Still, it is satisfying to grab the veggies on the later levels (where else can you get 2000 points for eating a green pepper???) and slowly inflate your enemies until their stomachs rupture and entrails splatter all over your miner's helmet. Uh, maybe the game isn't quite that graphic... but we can dream, can't we?

Pole Position rounds out the package and is quite close to the arcade program. Notice I didn't say "arcade experience." Using a standard Dreamcast controller, there's simply no way to duplicate the sensations you get from gripping the Atari steering wheel and slamming the shifter from low to high, as you would in an arcade. Here, the steering is best accomplished by using the "plus sign" controller, as the joystick tends to be hyper sensitive, and a slight turn may send your car careening into another racer. The trigger serves as the shifter, and the gas and brake pedals also have buttons assigned to them. It may not be noticeable at first, but you will be treated to some very different billboards than those we are used to seeing on Atari's version. Atari's Pole Position featured signs that displayed the Atari logo and characters from Centipede and Dig Dug. Here, the Dig Dug sign is intact, but the rest are all references to other Namco games, including Xevious, King and Balloon (perhaps a future "Lost Arcade Classic"?), Tower of Druaga, and a strange one with the Saturday morning cartoon version of Blinky the ghost with a caption reading... "But CLYDE!!!!"

Earlier, I alluded to the fact that one of these games is not Namco's brainchild. And that game is Ms.Pac-Man. Two independent American programmers (MIT students Doug MaCrae and Kevin Curran) made a bootleg of the original Pac-Man featuring four new mazes, bouncing fruit, and a pac character with legs. They called it "Crazy Otto." They showed it to the brass at Bally/Midway, who then decided to work with the programmers to fine tune the game into Ms.Pac-Man. Seems Midway was growing impatient with Namco in regards to the release of the first official sequel to Pac-Man, (which was to be Super Pac-Man) so in walks these young programmers with Crazy Otto, and Midway sees a sequel they can release independently of the Japanese powerhouse. So Ms.Pac-Man is all American BABY!!! Perhaps Namco licensed her after the fact.

Namco has produced a very solid retro package for Dreamcast owners. Seems that a little more could have been included, such as promotional flyer scans or background info, but overall, it's a great flashback to that wonderful time when every mall had an arcade crammed with machines, and every grocery store and K-Mart had several machines by the front door.

CGM

Bob "Rosha" Harris: Behind the Odyssey, Part II

by Earl Green

The Probe 2000 Story

In mid-1983, North American Phillips began to preview a new console, the Odyssey 3. It would replace the Odyssey 2's membrane keyboard with a PC Jr.-style "chiclet" keyboard, and offer new high-resolution graphics - some of which would enhance existing Odyssey 2 titles. The Odyssey 3 looked like a serious bid to compete in a market that was now ruled by such consoles as the ColecoVision and Atari 5200. It was also competing against such computers as the Commodore 64, Apple II, and Atari's computers, all of which were popular with game enthusiasts.

But with most of the Odyssey 3's early titles being touted as "enhanced" versions of Odyssey 2 games, was N.A.P. shooting itself in the foot by trying to maintain backward compatibility?

"Yes and no. All the Odyssey 3 was, was an Odyssey 2 with a character-grid video chip behind it. You could make some nice pictures with the chip, but you had to reuse character patterns to do it. In other words, you couldn't just draw a picture freehand and expect to have enough character patterns to be able to accomplish that picture on the chip," Harris recalls. "The initial idea was to release cartridges that worked on both the Odyssey 2 and Odyssey 3. What this usually meant was that the Odyssey 3 portion of it wasn't going to be part of the game play, just a snazzy background that had no impact on the game. This is what you would see in *Killer Bees,* for example. Instead of the playfield being black, it was a honeycomb. Except then we realized that the honeycomb background made it difficult to play the game, so the honeycomb was relegated to the areas outside the play region."

"There was also a plan to do Odyssey 3-only games," Harris confirms. "The first of these was called *FlashPoint,* by Rex Battenberg, which played something like *Defender* or *Robotron.* The Odyssey 3 was never released in the U.S., though, so that went by the wayside."

Later in 1983, North American Phillips also embarked on a new project to spread their games across several platforms. The rumor mill was working overtime, with consumers and industry observers anticipating that the Odyssey 3's capabilities would range from sharper arcade-style graphics to full computer capabilities complete with a modem. But N.A.P. had apparently decided not to hedge all of their bets on their own platform. Hence, Probe 2000 was born.

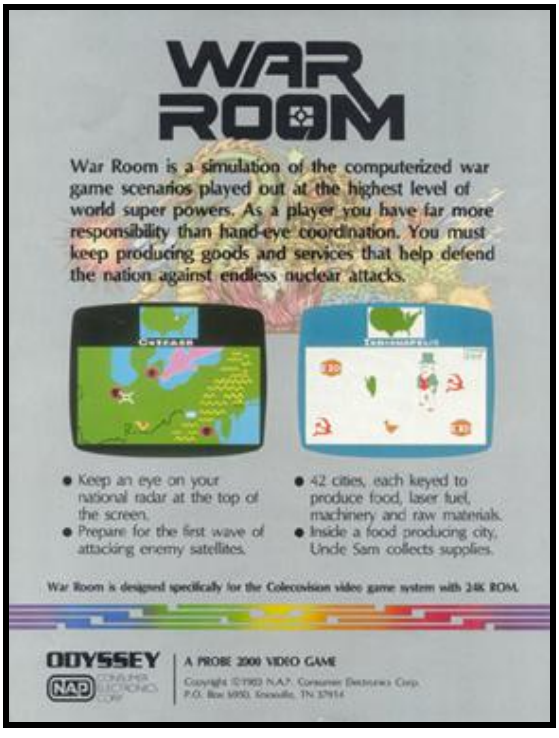
"We were planning a series of games for ColecoVision at the time," Harris says. "Our main goals were to shed the Odyssey image and try to come up with games that had more strategic depth than the simple shoot-'em-ups. This was our attempt to compete in a marketplace where expensive licensed titles were becoming the norm." Ironically, Harris cites Atari's *E.T.* as an example of the licensing juggernaut here - while many observers credit that very game with the downfall of the home video game industry at the time.

N.A.P.'s Probe 2000 line took a swipe at the same kind of brand name licensing, but Harris recalls that the company had little or no money to spend on such things - and even when they *did* spring for licensed characters and properties, it wasn't always something straight out of Hollywood.

"The schedule was originally for *Power Lords,* a licensed title in conjunction with some action figures and perhaps a cartoon series, to be first into production, with *War Room* following about two weeks later. Near the end of the schedule, the guy writing *Power Lords* quit in a huff. I hustled *War Room* up to get it into production."

But even late in the game, so to speak, Harris says that there was talk of *War Room* being renamed after a movie that was particularly popular with gamers and fledgling computer hackers at the time. "When the game was near completion, we also had discussions with the outfit that produced the movie ***War Games*** about the possibility of making some changes to the game and licensing the movie title. This fell through when Coleco promised the movie people they could get a version of the game to market in a ridiculously short time - which didn't happen, of course."

But Probe 2000 didn't settle on the *War Room* name quickly either. "Somewhere around here, I still have a folder with design notes through the project. The original title was to have been *Nuke, After Nuke,* to denote the two phases of play: being attacked, and trying to build up production before the next phase. The powers that be were more interested in generic names, and suggested *Satellite Defense,* before settling on *War Room*."


WAR ROOM
War Room is a simulation of the computerized war game scenarios played out at the highest level of world super powers. As a player you have far more responsibility than hand-eye coordination. You must keep producing goods and services that help defend the nation against endless nuclear attacks.
• Keep an eye on your national radar at the top of the screen.
• Prepare for the first wave of attacking enemy satellites.
• 42 cities, each keyed to produce food, laser fuel, machinery and raw materials.
• Inside a food producing city, Uncle Sam collects supplies.
War Room is designed specifically for the Colecovision video game system with 24K ROM.
ODYSSEY
A PROBE 2000 VIDEO GAME

Unfortunately, if the reviews had anything to say about it, some of the press understood *War Room* about as well as they understood *Killer Bees.* "We, of course, would clip and save all the reviews of our games," Harris says of himself and the other designers. "Most of them were good. After all, the magazines doing the reviewing sold advertising space to the companies selling the games. But there was one *War Room* review that was just awful. It said something like, 'This is just another blast 'em game, you blow up missiles approaching US cities, and that's it; we don't need another game promoting war; it's bad taste to show U.S. cities going up in mushroom clouds; why didn't they add any additional depth to the game? Whoever wrote this is one sick puppy.'"

Oops. This was not a review that was likely to boost sales. But Harris is quick to give credit where it is due: "Clearly they missed the additional depth, but they might be blameless for that. The PR department had a habit of sending games to magazines without the game's rules. And if you didn't have the overlay for the joystick buttons, you probably would never realize that you could *enter* a city."

Ironically, it was an Atari 2600 game - and a world-famous feline - that seemed to convince North American Phillips to get out of the video game business…but it wasn't some exceptional game from another manufacturer. It was a game that N.A.P. was working on as part of the Probe 2000 line.

"The outfit in Indianapolis that we had hired - I don't recall their name - to do the *Pink Panther* game for Atari reported a failure in the chips they had fabbed to do the cartridge," Harris says. "The Atari cartridge required in-cartridge bank-switching if you wanted a very large ROM in it, and this outfit had fabbed a chip to do that, and the chip failed."

But N.A.P. wasn't about to spring for the refabrication of new *Pink Panther* ROM chips, and the 2600 version of the game was cancelled, leaving the other editions in the realm of vaporware. "And since that was to be the bellwether of the line, N.A.P. decided to shut down the program."

Even as Probe 2000 crashed, however, there was some minor consolation for Harris. "*War Room* was already in production, and they had parts to build 80,000, so they built 'em. These sold out in a hurry. Regardless, N.A.P. wasn't going to make any more of them. I pleaded with them to make more, or to sell the title to someone else, but it was to no avail."

"And that was it for Probe 2000."

A Resurgence Of *Power*

All that fallout? From just one game? When the Probe 2000 project was shut down, according to Harris, "the stated reason was the failure of the Atari 2600 *Pink Panther* chip fab. I got the news when my boss just happened to mention it in passing."

But this didn't mean that the entire group was unemployed. "No one was let go. For a while the group fiddled around with designing another game system," Harris says. "Eventually they moved us to another building and put us to work on the VideoWriter - a self-contained word processor. You see that type of product in the office stores - a replacement for the typewriter."

But the stable of game designers who had seen out the Odyssey 2, the stillborn Odyssey 3, and the Probe 2000 line didn't stay there forever.

"After a couple years, I saw the writing on the wall for the VideoWriter project, though, and I left to work on optical recognition systems, and eventually moved into embedded programming for digital TV, which is what I do now," Harris says. "For me, I made a con-

scious decision to get out of video games because I would have to move to California to stay with it, which I couldn't afford, and I was scared by the negative view game work was given when I interviewed outside the game industry. After N.A.P. shut things down and I started looking for other jobs, I remember that the general attitude I seemed to run into was 'so, you've been programming games, and now you want a *real* job.' It came as a little slap in the face, because the real-time aspects of game programming were more challenging than most other programming jobs I've had since."

The Odyssey 2/Probe 2000 team scattered to different jobs, though none of them remain in the video game industry. "We are all still programmers, for the most part," Harris confesses. "Rex and I were probably the biggest game players. We were always trying different variants of board games."

But Bob Harris hasn't quite left the building. Remember the unfinished ColecoVision edition of *Power Lords*? It turned up at Classic Gaming Expo 2000 - a fact of which no one had made Harris aware until this interview. "That's interesting. After the other guy left, I managed to get the ColecoVision *Power Lords* passably working. Unfortunately, right in the middle of a dog and pony show for some magazine folks in New York City, the screen went from an interplanetary scene to all letters. Pretty embarrassing. That game was pretty lousy. I guess the rarity would be the attraction."

Another aborted Probe 2000 title for the ColecoVision, *Lord Of The Dungeon* (by fellow Odyssey alumnus Rex Battenberg), also resurfaced in prototype form at CGE 2000, revealing a first - a feature that would allow a player's game to be saved on battery-powered RAM embedded into the cartridge itself. "*Lord Of The Dungeon* was a good game. The reason this didn't get to market had to do with the battery backed-up RAM. Our hardware folks could never get it working reliably."

All of these prototypes, to say nothing of the fact that one can download Harris' classic games to play on various Odyssey 2 and ColecoVision emulators from the internet, begged the question of what he thought of the emulator scene. "I stumbled across the emulators last year. I think flattery is the first feeling that came to me - flattered that the games could still be interesting nearly 20 years later," Harris says.

But what about the issue of intellectual property? The Interactive Digital Software Association and its members have expended much effort in the area of quashing emulator and ROM downloads. "There's a little feeling of intellectual property theft. However, I quickly realized that I have no rights to the games; they belong to N.A.P. And as I found out back in the 80's, N.A.P. can do whatever they want with them - such as sell them in Europe without paying me. And N.A.P. was not smart enough even in 1984 to realize, in the case of *War Room,* that they had a property that they could sell," Harris says. "So I don't have a real problem with it. But I wouldn't be surprised to see N.A.P.'s lawyers swoop in. Perhaps there's some time limit to the copyright on the box, though."

But the emulator authors, and the sites who offer the emulators and ROMs for free download, may not have to worry - there's still no substitute for owning the console and the cartridge. "*Killer Bees* emulation still had a few glitches when I tried it," Harris notes. "I don't think the emulator quite accurately emulated collision detection. I actually didn't find *War Room,* so I should look for that. It ought to work fine, because I wasn't trying to push the limits of the hardware with that one." [A downloadable *War Room* ROM does, in fact, exist for the CVEM ColecoVision emulator.]

It has now been at least sixteen years since Bob Harris designed a video game. In response to questions of whether or not there's a reason for the classic game revival, Harris is frank in his assessment. "To be honest, I have not kept up with video gaming that much. Two reasons: too many kick-boxing games in the arcades, too many games on the shelves at Target, and I can't tell whether a game is good or bad without buying it. So I'm not really aware of what's popular at present. I *was* surprised when I found the emulators last year. But here's an example of how things have certainly changed. One of the guys where I work is 25, and he talks about wanting to design video games. What he talks about is, basically, a storyline. *His* story. The whole experience that he wants his player to have, he is mapping out. And that seems to match what I see in the games he plays at lunch. They are graphically impressive. Yet everything that is there for him to discover has been *put* there by the designers."

> "In games like *Robotron, Centipede, Q*Bert, Qix, Pac-Man, Joust, Tetris,* and others of that era, the whole was more than the sum of the parts."

"Contrast this to many of the older games," Harris continues. "Take, for example, *Robotron.* The game has no story line. The designers put a bunch of different elements in the game; in this case, it was opponents with different capabilities. The elements are literally scattered randomly about the playfield; there's no design here. As a player, you have a problem to solve. And the problem is not just simply one the designer made up. The solution to the problem - the strategy of playing the game - was not known to the designer until he or she got the game running and started playing it. Like chess, the strategies are not designed into the game; they are a *result* of the game. I'm sure the *Pac-Man* designers never expected people to memorize patterns to play the game. They probably didn't even know the game *had* those patterns."

We've let the cat out of the bag
...and to see all the other big game video excitement stop by booth 508.
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Pink Panther photo courtesy Marty Goldberg at www.classicgaming.com/gamingmuseum

Harris sums up his philosophy of what made the classic games classic: "In games like *Robotron, Centipede, Q*bert, Qix, Pac-Man, Joust, Tetris,* and others of that era, the whole was more than the sum of the parts."

And on the subject of a certain classic console for which he once designed new games, Harris has this to say about the Odyssey 2's place in history. "Call it an evolutionary cul-de-sac, a term borrowed from an Arthur C. Clarke book. There were some innovations - the keyboard and the voice module. Yet these died out; you never saw them in other game systems. If you want to stretch things, you could say the keyboard made this a precursor to the home computer, but there were already commercial home computers before the Odyssey 2 came out. We had an experiment to merge board and video games - don't see much of that around, though. I'm racking my brains, but I really can't think of one thing special about the Odyssey 2."

But there *is* a claim to immortality, one which Harris suddenly remembers: "Wait. No, there is one place for the Odyssey 2 in the history of games. The *K.C. Munchkin* case. I saw reference to that precedent in a recent issue of some magazine - Dr. Dobbs or Game Developer, one of those two. The case established some guidelines for how close something is allowed to be to an existing, copyrighted product." In fact, according to Harris, it established an immediate precedent which had major ramifications for the first Odyssey game that followed it: "*Pick Axe Pete* was originally *Hammerin' Hank.* After we lost the *K.C. Munchkin* case, there was concern that the game looked too much like *Donkey Kong* - which, after all, it was designed to be a copy of."

The fact that Harris reads Game Developer is a little hint that the Odyssey programmer's fascination with video games hasn't worn off completely. "If I get back into game design, it will probably be more along the lines of a board game," he says. "It might be on a computer screen, but it'd still be a board game."

For the sake of classic gamers everywhere, here's hoping that Bob Harris gets that chance.

Probing For Potential Panther Prototypes?

Only one Probe 2000 game was released, and two others surfaced at CGE 2000 as prototypes. Just how many more Probe 2000 games are still lurking out there, waiting to be discovered? Not too many, apparently. According to Bob Harris, the following games were on Probe 2000's development slate in late 1983:

- **Pink Panther**
  (Atari 2600, ColecoVision – not finished)
- **Power Lords**
  (Atari 2600, ColecoVision - CGE2K prototype, Odyssey 2 - released, Odyssey 3)
- **Lord of the Dungeon**
  (ColecoVision – CGE2K prototype)
- **War Room**
  (ColecoVision - released)
- **"Another Atari game, which I forget."** (??)

Some collecting resources list a version of *Pink Panther* for the Odyssey 2, which is usually listed as UR or a prototype, though there don't seem to be any reports of anyone having located the Odyssey version of the game. When asked to verify or deny the existence of the Odyssey version of *Pink Panther,* Harris replied, "I know we *planned* to do one. But I'm trying to think who was supposed to program it. Seems like it must have been Ed Averett, the freelance guy. I don't think it would have been released, because NAP would have paid license bucks to release it. Then again, we may have had to pay for the license even *without* releasing it for any game systems. So I guess I can't clear that one up. I don't recall ever seeing the game on screen."

And, just for the record, did Probe 2000 ever enter the fray of computer games? "We didn't consider home computers at that time, though I'm not sure why. I don't recall there being a big market for real-time action games on personal computers in '83."

Classic Gaming on the WORLD WIDE WEB

Visit Yesterdayland.com and you will instantly be transported back to the memories of yesterday. Featuring various categories, subdivided into decades, you can immerse yourself in all things past. The arcade game section has screen shots and bios of your favorite games; while the Saturday morning area will bring back memories of sitting in pj's, eating cereal, watching your favorite cartoons. There are also other categories, such as 'lunchboxes,' 'fashion,' 'movies,' 'music,' 'news/features,' and 'toys' to reminisce about. Oh, and don't miss the very cool "My Yesterdayland" section that allows you to create a personal profile for yourself with your favorite memories! If you can't quite let go of the past, why not embrace it with a visit to Yesterdayland!

Visit **www.yesterdayland.com** to begin your journey.

Balley Alley

Bally Alley is a website devoted to, what else, the Bally Astrocade! Adam Trionfo has devoted his spare time to all things Astrocade, including such gems as hardware and software pictures, ads and catalogs, and links to other Astrocade related websites. He is also the author of the Bally Alley newsletter, but so far, only one issue has been published. Perhaps if there are any Astrocade fans out there, you could drop him a line and see if he could use some extra help with anything (he has asked for help, specifically, with program downloads).

Visit
www.classicgaming.com/ballyalley/

The Official BIRA BIRA Webpage

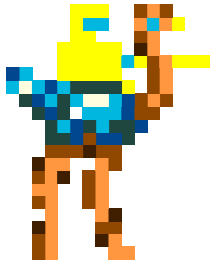
The story of the legend of BIRA BIRA was covered way back in our very first issue. However, since then, BIRA devotee, Robert Batina, wasn't able to keep up the site dedicated to the classic gaming god. "Rescue BIRA BIRA" game creator, Chris Cracknell jumped at the chance to pick up the slack. Chris is now proud to announce the "All New" Official BIRA BIRA Web page.

At his site you'll find the legend, the myths, the game, and, of course, how you can own your very own BIRA BIRA statue.

Become one of the faithful by visiting:
http://birabira.chaosmagic.com

Joust Pong

Have you played the Hasbro remake of "Pong" and wondered what they were thinking? I mean, why aren't those paddles shaped like the ostriches from Joust? The technology was there, man!



Well, fret no more! Kirk Israel has created a came which lets you use Ostriches instead of Pong Paddles. Surprisingly it's a pretty original twist on Pong since you have to "flap" your ostrich in order to return your opponents volley.

Joust Pong is available as a stand alone Windows game, an online Java game, or for the PalmPilot Pocket C.

Flap over to:
http://www.alienbill.com/abp/Retrobase

While Retrobase.com tends to cover more of the "neo classics" rather than the true oldies, it still makes for a fun visit.

Systems covered include the Jaguar, The Lynx, the Sega Mega Drive and the SNK Neo Geo. You can also play some classics such as Pac-Man and Asteroids via a Java applet. And certainly don't leave until you check out their section of vintage Atari commercials. Particularly amusing are the sales and marketing videos touting "The New Atari", promising that Atari is back and a force to be reckoned with. Go retro at: **www.retrobase.com**

The Console Legend Sega Master System

I bet you couldn't guess what this site deals with? You're right! The Sega Master System.

Rick Lapperman has created a fan site featuring roms, emulators and cheats and screenshots. Weekly high score competitions are also held to determine who the greatest SMS player of all time is.

http://www.geocities.com/snappa_fcw/sega.html

CGM

Got A Site??

Want your website to be considered for a listing in this column?

Just send us your particulars. . . website URL, contact name, and a valid e-mail address to **cav@classicgamer.com**

INSERT COIN

by Ken Jong

Way back in 1999, my friend Lon and I made a "guy" trip to beautiful Las Vegas, Nevada to experience the CG Expo for the first time. Here was our Mecca! We were oooing and ahhhing over the marvelous exhibits and treasures we saw and bought there. The classic gamers, exhibitors, and celebrities were all wonderful, so if you haven't been yet, try and go this year!

While competing in the Twin Galaxies' Hydro Thunder Tournament, tucked away in a corner of the CG Expo conference room, I met a gentleman named Gary Vincent. He said he worked at a family entertainment center in New Hampshire called Funspot. I had never heard of it before and asked him to tell me more about it. Funspot houses the largest collection of classic arcade games in the world and hosts the annual Funspot-Twin Galaxies International Classic Videogame and Pinball Tournament. I was intrigued and promised I would come out and visit him.

This past October, I kept the promise by dragging my wife to the East Coast for "my" vacation (another story unto itself). We arrived in New Hampshire as the fall colors were fading to brown, but there were still large areas where the trees were aflame with red, yellow, orange and violet. The weather was perfect and I was on vacation! What more could I want? Getting to Funspot and putting my hands on some classic games of course!

When we finally arrived, I fought off the urge to make a mad dash through the front doors and go screaming down the halls to where the games were (as I would have done long ago!). Instead, like a proper adult, I calmly escorted my wife in and walked around the facility, taking in all the sights and sounds. I couldn't put my finger on anything in particular, but suddenly something took me back over twenty-five years to another family entertainment center I frequented. I can't describe how excited I was, seeing rows of oh-so-familiar video games beckoning me to *insert coins*.

After an awesome tour of the facility and a great visit with Gary, he graciously agreed to do an interview for this article:

Classic Gamer Magazine: Gary, please tell us a little about yourself and how you got started with Funspot.

Gary Vincent: I started at Funspot in the summer of 1981. My family used to come to the Lakes Region of New Hampshire every year for vacation and Funspot was always a "must see" while there. We stopped coming for about 6 years or so and then I started coming on my own. Well, one summer (1981), Funspot ran short on help since all the college students left earlier than expected, so I was approached about working the rest of the summer. I was hooked! I was originally from Connecticut and we didn't have any arcades around my hometown, so Funspot was quite an experience for me.

Back then we had several outdoor attractions here: The Indian Village, Storybook Forest, and we owned the go-cart track across the street along with another arcade that used to be next to the cart track. Outdoor attractions proved to be too labor intensive and the season wasn't long enough to make it feasible so we slowly phased out that aspect of our business. I originally started on the prize counter/slot car counter. Back in those

days we had a huge slot car track in the middle of the game room. It took up about a third of the floor space then! Funspot was only one floor at that time. In 1982, we opened another Funspot in Amherst, NH and I went there to be the Assistant Manager. I returned to the Weirs Beach location in 1988. We could see the writing on the wall in the late 80's and sold off all our remote locations and expanded the original Weirs Beach site to the size it is today. We felt the area needed a large attraction like Funspot so we went for it. Through the years I worked my way up through the ranks to the position I have now, Operations Manager. I work closely with Bob Lawton, the owner of Funspot.

CGM: What's your favorite game?

GV: That's a tough one. I've seen so many games over the years that it's difficult to pick just one. I went through a Donkey Kong Junior faze in the late 80's; now I seem to be reverting back to anything made before 1986. I think I'm getting stuck in a time warp! I get excited when I unearth an old black and white game from the 70's. It sure is amazing how games have evolved since then. Evolved, yes, but did they get any better? That question will always spark a heated debate amongst players.

CGM: How did Funspot get started and how has it changed over the years?

GV: Funspot started in 1952 on the second floor of the Tarlson building on Weirs Beach. Bob had an indoor miniature golf with coin operated games lining the walls around it. Games such as Knock-out Fighters, Chicken Sam and Goalee were in the original location. I'm sure there aren't too many people who remember those! Back in '52, Funspot was called The Weirs Sports Center. When Bob and his brother John purchased the property we're on now in 1964, they changed the name to Funspot. At the opening of the new Funspot in 1964, we had the miniature golf and about 30 games. The original building is still here, we just kept adding onto it! If you happen to be in our restaurant, take a close look, the seating area for the restaurant is the original building we started with in 1964.

CGM: If Funspot is the 2nd largest arcade in America, who is the largest?

GV: Presently, the largest arcade in the world according to Twin Galaxies is Grand Prix in Dania, Florida. They have about 1,000 games there. What sets us apart from them is our collection of classic games. I remember the first time Walter Day came here and saw what we had. "This is the largest collection of classic games I've seen still running in an arcade," he said. At this time, about 125 of our 500 games are pre-1986.

CGM: What are some of the highlights from last year's (2000) Funspot-Twin Galaxies tournament?

GV: Last year's tournament was a blast! The players are great and the atmosphere is second to none. Where else can you get

together with other players who love the classics and re-live your childhood? I always tell people to go upstairs into the classic room, close their eyes and listen. The sounds bring back many memories. If you get a chance, try it and you'll see what I mean.

This year's long distance champions were Tommi Tiihonen and Esa Kokko of Helsinki, Finland. Eyal Cohen of Israel traveled the furthest for the 1999 tournament. Rick Fothergill of Canada set a new Junior Pac-Man record and Zack Hample of New York won $1,000 for breaking the world record on Arkanoid. Donald Hayes of Salem, NH surprised everyone with his Centipede skills. Usually you know who the champions are and what game they play when they come to the tournament, but Donald came out and showed his talents to all of us. He returned in November and broke the existing world record on Centipede with an amazing nine and a half hour performance! Some day I hope to beat Walter Day's score on Squid Search. I guess I'll have to keep practicing.

CGM: How do you see our industry today and where do you see it going?

GV: The industry has definitely changed over the years. Back in the mid-1980's you could throw any collection of games into an empty storefront and make a lot of money; now it's very different. If it had a monitor and some joysticks, you could pretty much guarantee that you'd make money. Games today are so different than when I started in the business. In the past, most games were either puzzle/maze based or problem solving. Now it seems the trend is multiple buttons with tons of secret moves. Since these games tend to be so complicated, many players never learn all the moves or secrets it takes to really master the game.

I am glad to see the improvement of driving games though. We were sitting down the other day reminiscing about the "old days" when I brought up Pole Position. I remember taking the plastic and cardboard off that game when it arrived in our Amherst location. We would stay after work just to play it because it was "so realistic!" Is that funny or what! I look at it now and it seems so primitive, but hey, it was the cat's meow back then.

As far as availability goes, there does not seem to be as much today as, say 15 years ago. I think this is due to selectivity. By that I mean consumers have become more selective as to how they will spend their money, so companies have become more selective in what they put into the market. This has had some positive and negative effects along the way. The positive being better, higher quality games. The negative being fewer games being released each year. Overall, my opinion is the game market has improved in quality with better, more advanced games being offered to the public. Daytona, Hydro Thunder, California Speed, and Star Wars Trilogy are some of the newer pieces that come to mind when I think of the improvements made over the years. Heck, remember when a driving game consisted of a plastic car on a wire running on top of a conveyor belt "track?" Oops, I think I'm dating myself here.

"Members also got to be the first ones to try new games when we got them. We would section off the game and only allow members to play it for the first week! The '80's sure were fun and unique."

The "arcade" has changed with the times. I really don't think you could open up a traditional arcade anymore and make it. By traditional, I mean just video games and pinball. Diversity is the answer. You need to have a little something for everyone or you won't make it in this business. At Funspot, we have a large variety of attractions so there is something for everyone.

CGM: How big is Funspot, and what are some of the attractions you mentioned earlier?

GV: Funspot has over 60,000 square feet of floor space on three levels. We offer 500+ games, food, candlepin/ten pin bowling, miniature golf, a driving range, a 400-seat commercial bingo hall, The D.A. Long Tavern, and a new state-of-the-art indoor golf center featuring six Full Swing Golf Simulators. Check our web site at www.funspotnh.com for more details.

CGM: How has the growth of the home video game market affected Funspot?

GV: I'm sure the home market has affected our business somewhat but I don't see how you could ever measure the extent of that impact. In my opinion, the home market will never eliminate the Family Entertainment Center. Coming here is a social event. People didn't stop going to the movies when the VCR came out, nor did the restaurant business die when microwave ovens made cooking a breeze. People like to go out, meet other people and have a good time. That's a little difficult to do sitting by yourself in the living room.

CGM: Describe Funspot during the '80s or "Golden Age" of arcade gaming.

GV: We used to be open 24 hours a day during the 1980's summer seasons. It was wild! There were so many people here that it was next to impossible to track individual players. During the off-season, we had pinball tournaments, pinball leagues, video game of the week contests, etc. Slowly, those activities lost their appeal and we phased them out in the late '80's. I have noticed a revival in this type of activity so you may see us start doing them again. The players, young and old, are rediscovering the classic games and all the hoopla that went with them. As long as I don't have to start wearing shiny shirts with skinny ties again, that's fine with me. We even used to have a Funspot Fun-Club where players could join and get special discounts and attend "Members Only" after hours parties. Members also got to be the first ones to try new games when we got them. We would section off the game and only allow members to play it for the first week! The '80's sure were fun and unique.

CGM: After nineteen years at Funspot, I'm sure you've got lots of stories. Would you share some of your favorite moments with us?

GV: I had a couple hold their wedding reception here at Funspot. It was a second marriage for both of them and they wanted to do something different this time around. Since many of the guests were bringing their families with them, Funspot was the perfect choice for them. At the time, we had a special exhibit here of African Elephants and the bride rode an elephant in her gown! Needless to say, her gown was a little dirty after that and it was even worse after she rode the go-carts! They had a great time.

We had a tense moment here in the summer of 1988. We had just opened our new Bowling Center a few months before and were getting ready for a good summer season. I had to go to the bank and was gone for about an hour. During that time we had a torrential rainstorm. “Great,” I thought, “we'll be really busy now!” As I headed back to Funspot, I noticed the parking lot looked empty. I pulled in and there were maybe 10 cars in the lot! This lot will hold over 400 cars so something had happened. I got into the building and there was 2 inches of mud

Scott Penley and Starr Lawton Enjoy Funspot (1979)

Gary Vincent Getting Jiggy on Hydro Thunder

all over the first and second floors! Apparently, the rain washed all of the new bark mulch into the storm drains and plugged the grates up solid so all the water and mud ran into the building! It looked hopeless, to say the least. But through the efforts of our employees and every cleaning company we could find, we had everything re-opened within 8 hours! About 40 of our employees rushed in and we broke up into teams to get everything back in shape again.

CGM: How do you stay true to your roots as a classic arcade and attract new people?

GV: It's tricky sometimes to maintain the best of both worlds. I am in the process of developing a Classic Museum here at Funspot. The eventual goal will be to show the evolution of the arcade up to and including the Golden Age and also show off some of the classic home consoles just to round out the entire game experience. "Home consoles in an arcade, are you nuts?" is what I am sometimes asked. They were a part of the history so I am going to develop a display just for them. Several gamers have donated systems to us already. Robert Mruczek of New York even donated a full size Galaxian game to our project. Dwayne Richard of Alberta, Canada donated a Stern Super Cobra to the museum effort.

CGM: What are your plans for the future of Funspot?

GV: We do not plan on any additional locations at this time. We really want to concentrate all our efforts here at Weirs Beach. We do have future plans to add a hotel and convention space so we can expand our market.

If you would like to help Gary with his Classic Games Museum effort, or just want to get directions, please contact him at: **gvincent@funspotnh.com**.

(Photos for article courtesy Ken Jong and Gary Vincent)

Scoreboard

"Classic" Status	**A+**
Facility	**A+**
Game Selection:	**A+**
Quality of Games:	**A+**
Fun Quotient:	**A+**

Summary:

Funspot sets the standard for "classic" family entertainment centers/arcades. It's clean, well kept, well lit (though too well-lit for some pinballs and uprights), has a ton of classic games and fun things to do for the whole family! You won't find a more friendly, helpful staff than Gary and his crew. You be the judge; visit Funspot and take in some of New Hampshire's natural beauty while you're there.

Classifieds

Wanted: Epoch Cassettevision carts #2 Baseball, #10 Grand Champion, #13 & up; Epoch Super Cassettevision carts #1, 4, 8-9, 12 & up; Casio PV-1000 carts 1-4, 6-8, 10-14, 16 & up; Koei Shogi handheld & cartridges; Epoch PokeKon handheld & cartridges; other old Japanese stuff. Russ Perry Jr, 2175 S Tonne Dr #105, Arlington Hts IL 60005, slapdash@enteract.com.

WANTED: Entex Adventure Vision gaming system and/or cartridges. Items be boxed or loose, working or not, any condition wanted. Contact imavidiot@adventurevision.zzn.com or visit www.adventurevision.com for more details.

Wanted: stellar assault for the sega 32x,or anything rare. dougs65@juno.com

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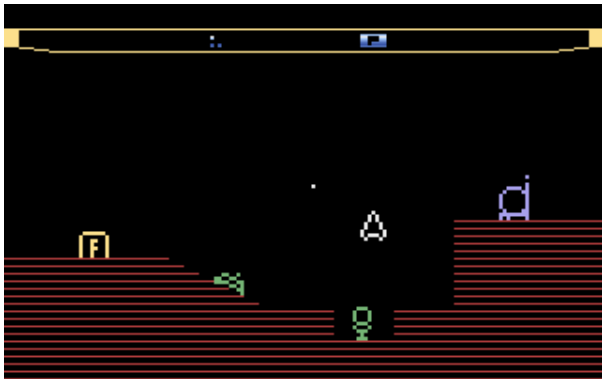
Thrust
by Thomas Jentzsch

Platform: Atari 2600
Genre: Arcade Action
Released: 2000

Hard to believe, but a novice programmer's first 2600 game is one of the most satisfying complex space shooters I've ever had the pleasure of playing. If this is Thomas' first programming effort, I'm waiting with anticipation for he'll program once he's "experienced!"

Thrust has been around on a variety of home computer systems for years, but this is the game's first appearance on a dedicated video game system. The storyline has you in command of a small ship attempting to steal Klystron Pods from the Empire's storage planets. This isn't easy, for the planet is heavily guarded and fortified. Plus, you may have to do some expert piloting just to get to where the Pod is stored. Be sure to pick up fuel as you go, otherwise you'll run out and crash.



Once you reach the Pod, activate your tractor beam and leave the planet's orbit for big points! But greater points await those who can cause the planet's reactor to go critical as they leave. Firing upon the reactor enough times will cause a meltdown you have seconds to escape from.

The game reminds me of Gravitar in that you must fight the forces of gravity while trying to complete your mission. However, with the added challenge of trying to sneak in, grab the pod, and dart out before the planet goes ka-blooey, Thrust is an exciting addition to any 2600 fan's library.

It may drive novices (like myself) up a wall until they get used to the controls and the effects of gravity. And, once you get used to it, you'll get to contend with negative gravity. This is not a gem that you'll get quickly bored with. This is a true "zone" game that will test you skills to their fullest.

Thrust is available at Hozer Video Games
www.netway.com/~hozervideo/

Crazy Valet
by Brian Prescott

Platform: Atari 2600
Genre: Puzzle Game
Released: 2000

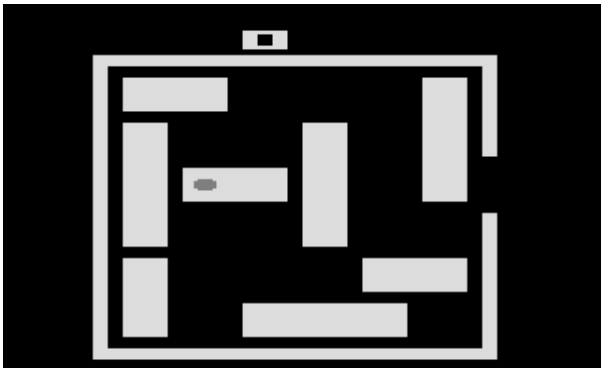
After spending your day watching the most incredible football game you've ever seen, you make your way back to the parking garage and into a traffic jam-packed nightmare. Seems a parking attendant - miffed because HE didn't get tickets for the game - has spent the entire day rearranging the vehicles in the lot in order to make it as difficult as possible for everyone to leave.

That's where YOU come in.

The game is based on the Rush Hour-type puzzles where you must shift cars back and forth in an attempt to free the one car pointing towards the lot's exit. However, as you move a vehicle out of the way, you may find it blocks other cars. Freeing up those cars may lock up others. As you can see, this is one of those sliding block puzzles taken to an insanely convoluted level.

Brian Prescott has done an outstanding job bringing the addictive little puzzler to the Atari 2600. The controls are simple. Move the little "red light" from vehicle to vehicle. Pressing the fire button turns the light green, enabling you to shift the highlighted car back and forth. Letting go of the button "parks" the car and turns the cursor red again. The object is to clear a path for the one horizontal car in the third row.

There are 26 levels to the game - each increasingly tougher to unravel. When you first power-up the game, only the first three levels are available for play. Solve Level 3, and Level 4 becomes available. Solve it, and Level 5 opens up. You may play the game for hours before you see the elusive higher levels. Sadly, there is no save or password function, so turning off the Atari sends the game back to the first three default levels. It's all or nothing from the moment you sit down. In the instructions, Brian claims there's a special message upon completing Level 26. I'll have to take his word for it. (I'm on Level 21 and holding...)



The game's icons consist of simple white boxes representing the various cars and trucks in the lot. It would've been nice if the car you need to free was colored differently from the rest of the vehicles. I sometimes found myself losing which one I was attempting to free. However, when the car escapes its paved prison, there's a chirpy little "beep beep" car horn. I thought this was a cute touch.

I'm a sucker for puzzle games, and Crazy Valet didn't disappoint. Those of you looking for an action-packed arcade game might want to look elsewhere. But those of you looking to give your brain a workout rather than your thumbs, will find this a satisfying diversion.

Brian has ordering instructions available on his website
http://web.tampabay.rr.com/bprescot/crazyvalet/

Vecmania

by John Dondzila

Platform: Vectrex
Genre: Arcade Action Multicart
Released: 1999

Eight brand-new Vectrex games on one cart. Can life get much better than this?

For the benefit of the three readers who are unfamiliar with the programmer's prior efforts, John Dondzila has been creating arcade-quality games for a variety of systems - especially the Vectrex - for many years now. As we go to press, his latest effort is Vecmania - a new multi-cart for the Vectrex videogame system.

Rather than attempt to summarize the offerings on this cart, I thought I'd judge each game on its own merits:

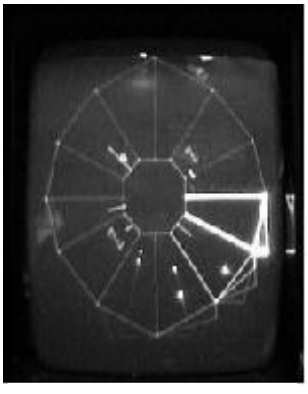
- First up is Star Fire Spirits, a first-person space shooter. Your mission, Eager Young Space Cadet, is to approach the mysterious Dark Planet, blasting the Planet's fighters as you approach. Upon defeating wave upon wave of fighters, you'll find yourself skimming along the Planet's surface, destroying bunkers and laser towers all the way. Finally, you'll dive into a long trench, dodging catwalks while attempting to drop a torpedo into the central core! OK, if the storyline sounds familiar, it should. John has done a remarkable job at adapting the Star Wars vector arcade game for the Vectrex. It's as fast and furious as its grown-up cousin and twice as heart-racing. For those who still feel the force within, you'll love this game.

- The next game, Repulse, is taking on quite a following amongst the Vectrex fans. It's quite difficult and quite addictive, all at once. Your ship must destroy the Mother Fortress by shooting a single pulse bolt down the thin shaft and into the core. However, the Fortress is constantly rotating and bouncing off the screen's walls, making a well-placed shot a stroke of luck and/or skill. As you try to set up this miracle, the Fortress' sentry ships come after you, firing their own pulse bolts. If they hit you, you won't blow up. You'll bounce! That's right, your bolts will cause the sentries to go ricocheting as well. Collision with the Fortress, however, is deadly! And eventually, the Fortress' Mother Ship may come out hunting! This game is the hardest of the games on the cart, but has exciting action that hardcore arcaders will eat up. Me? I can't get past Level 4. Great action and sound makes Repulse a winner!

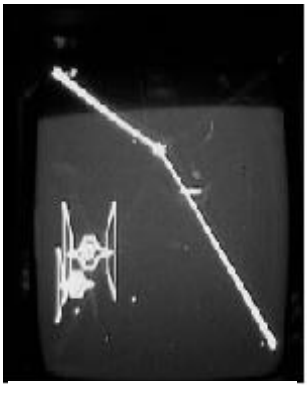
- Birds of Prey brings the arcade game Phoenix to the Vectrex. This game has you destroying wave after wave of attacking bird-like aliens. Survive enough waves and you'll go up against the Mother Ship where you must shoot away the rotating band to get a clear shot at the Mother Bird. The game is straight-forward with you moving back and forth and firing upon the diving enemy. Pressing button 3 activates a temporary shield that will protect you from lasers and destroy any bird that collides with it. Birds of Prey will satisfy any Galaxian/Pleaides/Phoenix cravings you may have.

Disk Duel

Patriots Remix



Abyss



Starfire

- The next three games are re-worked versions of games John has released in the past: Vector Vaders Remix; Patriots Remix; and Rockaroids Remix, 3rd Rock. Personally, I find Rockaroids most refreshing. This Asteroids clone is the best home version of the space-rock game I've ever seen. The rocks tumble through space, and the UFOs always seem to appear just in time to screw everything up. Even the THOOM-THOOM-THOOM backbeat of the game is a spot-on reproduction of the classic vector game. Great fun.

- Patriots Remix brings the excitement of defending your planet's cities from wave after wave of enemy missiles. Using the two gunnery bases on either side of the screen, you must send up your own missiles to deflect the incoming ICBMs. Occasionally, planes and saucers will drift through, dropping more Atomic Death From the Skies. And beware the missile-dodging Smart Bomb! This game is great fun...until the upper levels. When there's a great many missiles on-screen, the gameplay slows up considerably. When you start clearing out the missiles, the game speeds back up to normal. The sudden change in speed has caused me to miss a few suddenly-speedy missiles. From what I understand, John has already optimized this game's graphics to correct this problem. Sadly, it stills exists. Still, a very fun adaptation.

- What game system doesn't have its own "destroy wave after wave of space invaders" game? Well, John corrected the Vectrex slight by programming Vector Vaders. As you destroy the invaders, they move faster and faster - first across, then down, then across, then... you get the picture. Fortunately, you have four bunkers to hide under - until you or they shoot them into oblivion. My only gripe (and it's a minor one) is that I wish the invaders could've looked like...well, invaders. As it is now, the invaders look like little V's. I felt like I was shooting down distant birds.

- The last two items on the cart are two unfinished games that John wished to share with fans. These games may or may not ever see the light of day, but it was nice of John to let us see what he's been toying with. The first demo is called Abyss. John says that to finish the game, he'd have to completely re-write the code. You control a claw-like creature as it shoots at invaders coming up from a long tube. Right now, all you can do in this Tempest clone is spin about and shoot down the tunnel. You can't die, so it's just here as a curiosity. I'd be curious to see it finished. (I'm a Tempest hound.)

- Last up is Disc Duel and this demo has great, great promise to be another great Dondzila offering. Taking its cue from Discs of Tron, you and a friend fire discs at each other in a futuristic stadium as you leap from floating platform to floating platform. Since this game lets you duel versus another person, it's great fun with two joysticks. A great sign of Things To Come!

Every game on this cart would be recommended - some very highly - if it came just by itself. Since you get all of this on one cart for one small price, it's a great way to get the arcade experience at home all at once! (One other nice touch: John programs your name into the title screen making every cart a very personal collectible.)

John has ordering instructions at his website *www.classicgamecreations.com* where he also has homebrews for the ColecoVision and Odyssey2 systems as well.

CGM

PSX RETROGAMES

by Mark Androvich

In case you've been living in a cave for the past few months, you're probably aware that Sony released its PlayStation 2 game system in October. Unfortunately, due to manufacturing problems and delays, very few people—namely, hardcore gamers who preordered in April, spoiled kids whose parents were willing to plunk down $500 on eBay, and Saddam Hussein—have managed to get their hands on one. The supply will eventually catch up to the demand, of course, but there is no denying that the original PlayStation is now on its last legs. As it begins the long march into history, it's worth taking a look at the many classic videogames that were re-introduced to a new generation thanks to Sony's 32-bit gray machine.

Whether due to the fast chip speed, or to the use of CD-ROM as a storage media, the PlayStation saw more classic videogame collections and remakes than any system that came before it. Until recently, emulation (running the original code from an arcade game) wasn't even a possibility because the home systems weren't as powerful as the coin-op games they were trying to emulate. With the PS One's appearance in 1995, developers finally had a system that was up to the challenge. A handful of companies came to realize that there was profit to be made from capitalizing on feelings of nostalgia. Not surprisingly, the companies that are the most involved in the new genre known as retrogaming" are many of the same ones that made the original games in the first place.

Classic home videogames also received the emulation treatment thanks to Activision, although the names of the licensed sports games had to be changed for the Intellivision collection. The most prevalent classic was PITFALL! Not only did the original game appear as part of the ACTIVISION CLASSICS compilation, but it was also hidden inside Activision's update entitled PITFALL: BEYOND THE JUNGLE (with Bruce Campbell providing the voice of Pitfall Harry).

INTELLIVISION CLASSIC GAMES included: Armor Battle, Astrosmash, Auto Racing, Baseball, Basketball, Boxing, Checkers, Chess, Football, Frog Bog, Golf, Hockey, Hover Force, Las Vegas Poker and Blackjack, Night Stalker, Pinball, Sea Battle, Shark! Shark!, Sharp Shot, Skiing, Snafu, Soccer, Space Armada, Space Battle, Space Hawk, Super Pro Volleyball, Stadium Mud Buggies, Star Strike, Sub Hunt, and Tennis.

ACTIVISION CLASSICS included: Atlantis (yeah, we know it's an Imagic game), Barnstorming, Boxing, Chopper Command, Cosmic Commuter, Crackpots, Dolphin, Dragster, Enduro, Fishing Derby, Freeway, Frostbite, Grand Prix, H.E.R.O., Ice Hockey, Kaboom!, Keystone Kapers, Laser Blast, Megamania, Pitfall!, Plaque Attack, River Raid, River Raid II, Seaquest, Skiing, Sky Jinks, Spider Fighter, Stampede, Star Master, and Tennis.

Computer game compilations haven't seen the light of day on the PlayStation, even though Activision released Commodore 64 and Infocom game collections for the PC. The only classic PC games I'm aware of that were released on the PlayStation were LEMMINGS and LODE RUNNER (COMMAND AND CONQUER isn't quite old enough to be a classic in my opinion).

Although this accompanying list is focused on PlayStation, the N64 and Dreamcast were not without a few classic collections of their own. THE NEXT TETRIS, MS. PAC-MAN MAZE MADNESS, FROGGER 2, CENTIPEDE, and Q*BERT are all available for Dreamcast. TETRIS, PAPERBOY, MS. PAC-MAN MAZE MADNESS, LODE RUNNER 3D, ROBOTRON 64, and GAUNTLET LEGENDS are available for the N64, along with DONKEY KONG 64 (containing a version of the original coin-op) and EXCITEBIKE 64 (also containing a version of the original). Midway released one volume of its arcade classics—Defender, Robotron, Sinistar, Joust, Bubbles, and Defender II—for both N64 and Dreamcast. Similarly, Namco made one volume of its museum—containing Pac-Man, Ms. Pac-Man, Galaxian, Galaga, Pole Position, and Dig-Dug—available for both N64 and Dreamcast.

The emergence of the retrogaming genre on the original PlayStation is not likely to be repeated on the PlayStation 2. For one thing, the most popular classic coin-ops from the late 70's and 1980's have already appeared in collections. Most of those that haven't reappeared (Venture, Berzerk, Star Castle, etc.) were products of now-defunct companies. Or, in the case of games like Xenophobe, often the company responsible (Midway, in this case) didn't bother to retain the original source code. I guess they never figured there would be an interest in preserving these old games, but fortunately their creations still live on thanks to MAME.

Secondly, coin-ops weren't as popular or plentiful in the 1990's, and those games that did attract a large audience (Street Fighter, Mortal Kombat, and Virtua Fighter, to name a few) have already been released for the 32-bit and 64-bit generation of systems. And finally, now that 3D games are the established norm, just about every classic concept that could make the jump to 3D has already done so, even if under a different name. What would be the point in creating a true 3D Battlezone update, for example, when there are already tank combat games on the market? And, as we've seen in the case of Missile Command and Centipede, updating some 2D games to 3D eliminates whatever it was that made the original fun in the first place.

No, the retrogaming phenomenon has largely run its course. Even though there will continue to be interest in old games, as evidenced by the CGExpo and this magazine you are holding in your hands, I don't expect future systems to offer as much in the way of classic games as the original PlayStation did. But, thanks to the fact that the PS2 is backwards compatible, the above-listed games can live on…if only for one more generation of home systems.

Unable to start a classic gaming magazine of his own, MARK ANDROVICH "sold out" and now writes PlayStation reviews for PSE2 magazine and Prima strategy guides for the latest games. Once in awhile, however, he blows the dust off his old Atari 2600 and becomes interested in submitting articles to CGM.

Here's a handy alphabetical list of those classic coin-op videogames which are/were available in some way, shape, or form on the PlayStation:

10 YARD FIGHT: On IREM ARCADE CLASSICS (Japan only)

720: On ARCADE PARTY PACK

1942: On a CAPCOM GENERATIONS disk (Japan only) along with 1943

ASTEROIDS: The original is on ARCADE'S GREATEST HITS: ATARI 1 and is also hidden inside the Activision ASTEROIDS remake.

ASSAULT: On NAMCO Vol. 4

BATTLEZONE: On ARCADE'S GREATEST HITS (AGH): ATARI 1

BLASTER: On AGH: MIDWAY 2

BOSCONIAN: On NAMCO Vol. 1

BREAKOUT: Remade by Hasbro under the same name

BUBBLES: On WILLIAM'S ARCADE'S GREATEST HITS

BURGERTIME: On AGH: MIDWAY 2

CASTLEVANIA: Remade as CASTLEVANIA:

SYMPHONY OF THE NIGHT

CENTIPEDE: The original is on AGH:

ATARI 1 and together with Hasbro's CENTIPEDE remake.

CIRCUS CHARLIE: On KONAMI ARCADE CLASSICS

CRAZY CLIMBER: An updated version is on both HYPER CRAZY CLIMBER and CRAZY

CLIMBER 2000, which also includes the original (Both games released in Japan only).

CRYSTAL CASTLES: On AGH: ATARI 2

COMMANDO: On a CAPCOM GENERATIONS disk (Japan only)

CONTRA: Both C: THE CONTRA AD

VENTURE and LEGACY OF WAR were sequels of sorts.

DEFENDER: On WILLIAM'S ARCADE'S GREATEST HITS

DEFENDER II: On WILLIAM'S ARCADE'S GREATEST HITS (renamed from STARGATE).

DIG DUG: On NAMCO Vol. 3

DRAGON SPIRIT: On NAMCO Vol. 5

FROGGER: Remade by Hasbro as

FROGGER and sequel FROGGER 2, neither of which feature an emulation of the original.

GALAGA: On NAMCO Vol. 1, and updated as Hasbro's GALAGA: DESTINATION EARTH.

GALAXIAN: Original on NAMCO Vol. 3, and updated sequel GALAXIAN3 (Japan only).

GALPUS: On NAMCO Vol. 2

GAUNTLET: Original on AGH: ATARI 2, and sequel GAUNTLET LEGENDS

GRADIUS: On GRADIUS DELUXE PACK (Japan only) together with GRADIUS II

GYRUSS: On KONAMI'S ARCADE CLASSICS

JOUST: On WILLIAM'S ARCADE'S GREATEST HITS

JOUST 2: On AGH: MIDWAY 2

KLAX: On ARCADE PARTY PACK

KUNG FU MASTER: On IREM ARCADE CLASSICS (Japan only)

LETHAL ENFORCERS: On LETHAL ENFORCERS I and II

MAPPY: On NAMCO Vol. 2

MARBLE MADNESS: On AGH: ATARI 2

MERCS: On a CAPCOM GENERATIONS disk.

MILLIPEDE: On AGH: ATARI 2

MISSILE COMMAND: On AGH: ATARI 1 and as Hasbro remake under the same name.

MOON PATROL: On AGH: MIDWAY 2

MS. PAC-MAN: Original on NAMCO Vol. 3 and with sequel MPM: MAZE MADNESS.

ORDYNE: On NAMCO Vol. 4

PAC-LAND: On NAMCO Vol. 4

PAC-MAN: Original on NAMCO Vol. 1 and with sequel PM WORLD: 20th ANNIVERSARY.

PAC-MANIA: On NAMCO Vol. 5

PAPERBOY: On AGH: ATARI 2. Planned remake canned—released for N64 only.

POLE POSITION: On NAMCO Vol. 1

POLE POSITION II: On NAMCO Vol. 3

PONG: Original hidden inside Hasbro remake under the same name

POOYAN: On KONAMI'S ARCADE CLASSICS

Q*BERT: Original and remake by Hasbro under the same name

RALLY-X: The original, and NEW RALLY X, are both found on NAMCO Volume 1

RAMPAGE: On ARCADE PARTY PACK, and as sequels WORLD TOUR and UNIVERSAL TOUR

ROAD BLASTERS: On AGH: ATARI 2

ROAD FIGHTER: On KONAMI'S ARCADE CLASSICS

ROC N' ROPE: On KONAMI'S ARCADE CLASSICS

ROBOTRON: On WILLIAM'S ARCADE'S

GREATEST HITS and remade as ROBOTRON X

ROOT BEER TAPPER: On AGH: MIDWAY 2

SCRAMBLE: On KONAMI'S ARCADE CLASSICS

SHAO-LIN's ROAD: On KONAMI'S ARCADE CLASSICS

SINISTAR: On WILLIAM'S ARCADE'S GREATEST HITS

SMASH TV: On ARCADE PARTY PACK

SPLAT: On AGH: MIDWAY 2

SPY HUNTER: On AGH: MIDWAY 2

SUPER BREAKOUT On AGH: ATARI 1

SUPER COBRA: On KONAMI'S ARCADE CLASSICS

SUPER PAC-MAN: On NAMCO Vol. 2

SUPER SPRINT: On ARCADE PARTY PACK

TETRIS: TETRIS PLUS was released by Jaleco, followed by Hasbro's THE NEXT TETRIS, but neither were identical to the Atari coin-op

TEMPEST: Original on AGH: ATARI 1, with an update entitled TEMPEST X3 from Interplay

TIME PILOT: On KONAMI'S ARCADE CLASSICS

TOOBIN: On ARCADE PARTY PACK

XEVIOUS: Original on NAMCO Vol. 2, and with an updated version on XEVIOUS 3D/G+

YIE AR KUNG FU: On KONAMI'S ARCADE CLASSICS

Article originally appeared in Video and Computer Gaming Illustrated, January, 1984 issue.

The Strategic Scenario

By Leonard Herman

There are a wealth of games available that let your fingers do the walking . . . And let your brain do most of the work!

There are a wealth of games available that let your fingers do the walking...and your brain do most of the work!

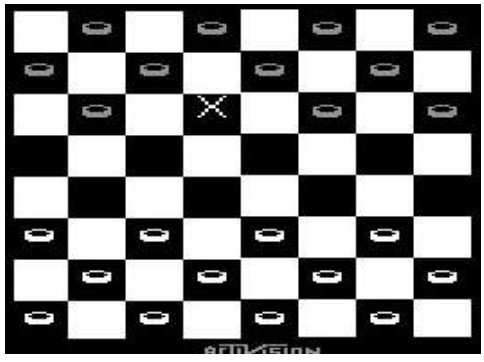
The centuries old notion of man v. machine has come to frivolous fruition with the introduction of videogames. Alas, the human being seems to be the loser in this interesting battle.

In the majority of videogames in which you play against the computer, the computer is ultimately and inevitably the victor. The thrill of victory is earned only when you beat a previous high score; you are only winning over another human opponent, or yourself. In the long run, the omnipotent computer is always the winner.

Fortunately for owners of the Atari 2600 who want to win against their opponents but not surrender to the machine, there are games that allow you to play strategically rather than accepting challenges that the computer serves up. These strategic games allow you and your opponents to plan your moves; the player with the more shrewd strategy will ultimately be the winner. The game doesn't end when both players have lost their final turn, with the high score determining the winner. The game ends because one competitor is out.

One should not equate strategy games with adventure games. Adventure games are those games in which a single player sets out on a quest in order to find something. Strategy is not involved; most of the time you are wandering through different screens in search of certain objects. No, to play a game strategically, you must have some kind of plan when you begin. Because 'strategy' is often associated with the military, it can be assumed that there are two sides pitted against each other, and that's why some sort of strategic plan is needed. Thus, an adventure game that is played by one person cannot be considered a strategic game. You may play it strategically but it will be a one-sided affair since you aren't playing against anyone. Certainly the computer isn't playing strategically since it is always following its programming.

Although 'strategy' is a military word, of the twenty or so military games that are available for the 2600, only one could really be considered strategic. The majority of games, such as Atari's *Battlezone*, *Air-Sea Battle*, and *Submarine Commander,* are merely different forms of target games. Only M-Network's *Armor Ambush*, a two-player tank game, allows for strategic play.



Checkers *from Activision*

In this game, you and your opponent each have two tanks to choose from; these can be alternated throughout the game. You lose a tank when it has been shot three times by the enemy. You can plan your strategy right from the beginning. If you think it will be to your advantage to have your opponent go after your vulnerable tank while you go after his or her operating one, definitely follow this plan. You can also take into account the terrain as you plan your line of attack. Your tank will drive fast on roads, slower on grass, and slowest through water. You can plan to go after your opponent by coercing his/her tank towards the water as you travel on the roads. Because the game consists of several playfields, no two games will ever be the same. The winner of this match will definitely be the player with the more sound strategy.

The description of *Armor Ambush* will lead 2600 owners to think of *Combat*, the antiquated war game that accompanies all 2600 consoles. Like *Armor Ambush*, *Combat* includes "Tank," another military tank game in which two players pit themselves against each other with tanks. However, this cannot be considered a strategic game since the players cannot map out their battle plan. "Tank" is merely a game in which you must shoot your opponent more times than he shoots you within a specified period of time. Real war, as you probably know, is not fought within a time limit. In "Tank" you know when the game will end and nothing you do can change that.

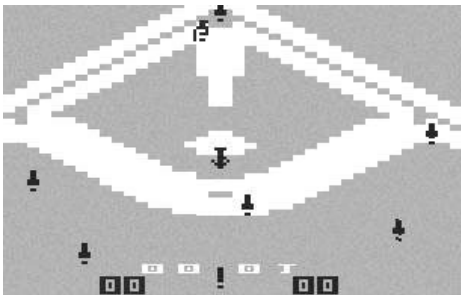
War has been a way of life since before historical record; throughout the ages war has inspired board games that have since found their way into the videogame circuit. Among the oldest strategic games that began as board games are *Video Chess*, *Checkers*, and *Othello*. *Checkers*, which is available from both Atari & Activision for the 2600, and *Othello* are both excellent strategy games. Both games are easy to learn but very difficult to master, and both games are suitable for two player competition. Both games can also be played against the computer, but the strategy that you customarily utilize in solo games may not work. Why? Because when you play against the computer, you can't trick it into anything. Since the computer monitors every single move, you can't plan on 'sneaking' up on your opponent and making a surprise attack. A human opponent may not look many moves ahead (unless (s)he is an expert player) and you can therefore complete a surprise attack. For this reason, *Video Chess* cannot be included in a list of strategic games as this is a one-player only game.

But there are games available for the 2600 with non-war themes that still make excellent use of strategic situations. In *Surround*, one of the oldest games available for the system, you and your opponent each control a constantly moving on-screen cursor. As the cursor is moved, it leaves a solid line in its wake which neither player can run into without losing a turn. The object is to contain your constantly moving opponent, to force him/her to crash into one of the walls. You score a point whenever you stop your opponent; the first player to score ten points is the winner. You must plan the moves you are about to take, and you must do so quickly. Remember, you want to close your enemy in without getting closed in yourself.

Flag Capture is a video version of the old board game classic, *Stratego*. In the board game (which is also available in an electronic edition), you must set up a plan to find the flag through trial and error while avoiding bombs. In a way it resembles chess in that each piece has its own function and some pieces outrank others. The unique facet of *Stratego* is that each player only knows what his/her pieces are. Although you can see what each of your pieces are worth, you can only see the back of your opponent's pieces and therefore can't see what their value is. The object of the game is to strategically set up your opponent's setup and capture his or her flag before (s)he can get to yours.

Flag Capture, in which you must also capture a flag, is *Stratego minimo*. Confrontations between players are eliminated in this stripped-down version: each player controls only one

Leonard Herman is the author of the books ABC to the VCS (a Directory of Software to the Atari 2600 and Phoenix: The Fall and Rise of Videogames



Sports Illustrated: Super Challenge Baseball, RealSports Football, and RealSports Baseball.

piece and the object is to find the single flag first. The flag is hidden somewhere within a grid of sixty-four squares. Every time you land on a square, a clue is revealed that gives the direction in which the flag can be found. You may also land on a bomb, which will send you hurtling back to your original position.

Flag Capture may be played head-to-head in two different ways, each offering its own type of strategy. In one variation, both you and your opponent move your pieces through the board at the same time. In addition to paying attention to your own clues, you must watch for your opponent's as they will also lead you to the flag. Time is an important factor here since both players move at the same time. In the second variation the two players alternate turns in the search for the flag. Again, the person who discovers the flag will score the point. Although *Flag Capture* doesn't involve as much strategic skill as the previously mentioned games, its resemblance to *Stratego* makes it worth mentioning.

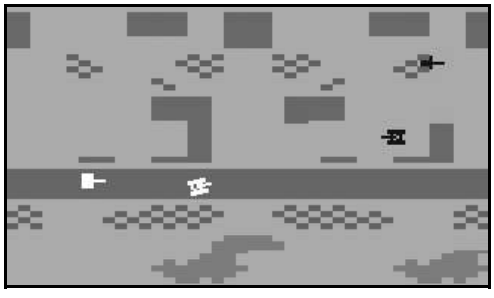
U.S. Games' *Entombed* is the only game that is as much fun for one person to play as it is when two people compete head-to-head. The two-player version, however, is much more challenging and involves strategy.

The action in this game takes place in a maze, which continuously scrolls upwards. Each player controls an on-screen explorer who must go into the maze and head towards the bottom of the screen. Unfortunately, some trails lead to dead ends, which cannot be seen until that portion of the playfield scrolls onto the screen. By this time it may be too late to back-track because the entrance to the passage may have already scrolled off the screen. If your character stops moving, it will be dragged towards the top of the screen as the maze scrolls upwards. Players lose a turn whenever their on-screen character scrolls off the top. Each player begins with three turns, and the first player to lose all three lives is the loser .

Entombed strategy involves interfering with your opponent's ability to move through the maze. Initially each player begins with one 'make-break,' which allows you to blast a hole in a wall if you run into a dead-end. However, you can also use 'make-breaks' to build walls. Occasionally you'll run into blinking blocks, which will award you additional 'make-breaks.' By using your 'make-breaks' to build walls, you can strategically plan to trap your opponent behind some walls after (s)he runs out of his or her own 'make-breaks.' The game becomes especially agonizing when both players have the same number of 'make-breaks' and are both on their last turn. Any false move to try and hold back your opponent may end disastrously for yourself!

Atari's *Slot Racers* is a head-to-head racing game in which you must blow your opponent off the road with a cannon that is mounted upon the hood of your car. Each player's car travels in opposite directions within the maze and must avoid the bombs that are fired from the opposing car. If you run into a bomb, your opponent will score a point. You can control the speed of your car as well as the routes that it takes. The bombs that you fire can be programmed to move in a straight line or turn at every curve. *Slot Racers* is a fast-paced game and may seem confusing if you just move around and fire at will. The best way to play is to take command of the situation and plan your moves.

Even sports games, which can be considered as modern 'civilized' forms of warfare, can be played strategically. Although some video sports for the 2600, such as Atari's *Basketball* and the three versions of *Soccer* involve certain types of strategic moves, it is the three football games that make the best use of strategy. Atari's *Football*, *Realsports Football*, and M-Network's *Super Challenge Football* all allow you to input plays that your on-screen characters will perform. Of course, once the play is selected, the game will depend upon your finger-skill. However, you can play strategically by inputting certain plays and trying to guess how your opponent will respond.



Armor Ambush: ***not just combat.***

Baseball for the 2600 is a different story. Atari's *Home Run* and M-Network's *Super Challenge Baseball* offer simplified versions of the game in which you merely decide upon your pitch when you are in the outfield, and try to hit the pitch when you are at bat. No strategy is required. *Super Challenge Baseball* goes a little beyond *Home Run*: you are given the option of whether you want your lead runner to steal a base or not.

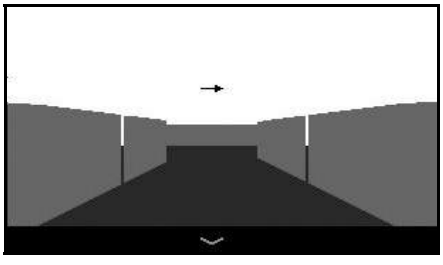
Atari's *Realsports Baseball*, on the other hand, gives you the opportunity to play strategically. As in the football games, you must first input information on what you plan to do. If you are playing the field, you must decide whether you want to pitch a ball or strike. If you are at bat, you must either bunt, hit a grounder, or a home run. The results depend on the combination of what you and your opponent program. As with the football games, it finally comes down to trying to outguess your opponent.

Even with the lack of a multitude of strategic games for the 2600, the future still doesn't look bright for fans of this type of game. Most companies are releasing games for solo players and, as noted in the beginning of this article, strategic situations only work when players compete head to head. Still, it isn't as bad as it could be. One company, Avalon Hill, which is best known for its long line of strategic board games (*Diplomacy*, *Blitzkrieg*), is now producing high-caliber videogames for the VCS. Although its initial games, *Death Trap*, *London Blitz*, and *Wall Ball*, are solid, playable games, they are all single-player games and don't lend themselves to strategy, as we have defined the word here. However, using the company's background as a guide, it is safe to say that if any company will make strategic games for the VCS, it will be Avalon Hill.

Parker Brothers is another company with a background of strategic board games that is producing games for the 2600. As with Avalon Hill, no strategic games have been released yet. However, the company has translated one of its best strategic board games, *Risk*, into a video version for the Atari computers. In the works are other strategic games such as *Monopoly* and *Clue*. It is just possible that adaptations for the low-memory 2600 might also be in the works if they are feasible.

Unfortunately, the current trend in home videogames calls for single player arcade adaptations. The major selling point in games is graphics flash. Not much programming remains to allow for strategic, head-to-head play. This is all well and good, but we can't help but yearn for the day when the player's intelligence becomes equally important as his/her reflexes, and interaction is created between people, rather than between man and machine.

CGM



London Blitz and Death Trap, from strategy-game king Avalon Hill

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Jaguar Lynx: Straight From the Cat's Mouth

by Carl Forhan

Songbird is still recklessly pursuing new titles to develop and publish on the Jaguar and Lynx. The latest out the door, as reported last issue, is Championship Rally for the Atari Lynx. If you haven't picked this gem up yet, you really owe it to yourself to have in your possession the finest overhead racer available on this handheld. Likewise, the 3D action of Remnant on the Lynx has also wowed numerous customers. Just check out this pic and you'll see this game means business! Also, don't forget to check out the fantasy RPG game Distant Lands, currently previewed on the Songbird website over at: http://songbird.atari.net.

Don't despair, Jaguar fans -- Songbird

Remnant

hears your cry for continued new life on the Jag. I can't say much at this time, but there are some serious gaming goodies that should be available in the summer/fall timeframe of this year. Keep your eyes peeled to http://songbird.atari.net for all the latest, or send a blank email to atari-subscribe@egroups.com to get the news delivered directly to your inbox. Also, keep your eyes on games like Gorf Pluz, JagTris, Jagmania, and Arkanna. The hobby developers behind these games (and others not listed here) are to be commended for their continued support of the Jaguar.

We've got a special treat in store for you this ish -- a sneak peak at two games that are in all likelihood lost for good. It's still fun to put them through the paces, and let fellow Atari fans know what might have been. And, no, these aren't previews of future games for Songbird to publish -- there is a legal quagmire surrounding each game (not to mention a severe lack of source code to allow any modifications), so I'm presenting these reviews strictly as a fellow Atari fan. Enjoy!

First up is Thea Realm Fighters for the Atari Jaguar, developed by High Voltage Software. An interesting tidbit about this game is that several actors from the legendary Mortal Kombat video game series wanted to strike out on their own and pursue a new fighting game which, if it became a hit, would give them a lifetime of merchandising royalties (they got the goose egg from all their MK work in this area). Sadly, as with so many other Jaguar games, this game was dropped as it became apparent to everyone in-house or not that the Jaguar was disappearing from the gaming radar in late 1995.

This game certainly has an MK (or for Jag fans, Ultra Vortek) feel to it -- it consists of digitized actors in a variety of costumes in a straightforward 2D fighter. There are only 4 fighters (and 7 backgrounds) in the demo I tried, but according to HVS, there were well over 15 during development. The game is surprisingly colorful and the motion fluid, resulting in a high-speed fighting game with several layers of parallax scrolling. There are plenty of nifty special moves; anything from shock treatment to pulling massive hammers out of the ground.

Thea Realm Fighters

All the basic pieces are here -- collisions, animation, special moves, damage, and so on. The game is enough fun for two players to enjoy, but unfortunately no logic was implemented for a one-player game. Also, every now and then, the game crashes unexpectedly, but this is minor since the current version only supports a single round of combat. Still, given how playable the game is in its current state, it's a shame there wasn't justification to pursue it to completion; I'm sure Jaguar fans would have had a blast with this one.

Next up is the elusive Alien vs. Predator for the Atari Lynx. You may have seen the recent eBay auction of a prototype cartridge -- that version was different from this version as evidenced by the in-game shots. The game is still far from complete, but it's nonetheless an impressive beta for the cherished handheld, and it

Alien Vs. Predator

Alien Vs. Predator

is, of course, what eventually inspired the best-selling Jaguar version of the game.

The game is not a real-time raycasting engine a la Wolfenstein 3D. Instead, all the walls are "locked" at 90 degree angles and therefore the player can only turn at right angles. Still, you can roam around the map, pick up items, play as either the Marine or Predator, switch between multiple guns (as the Marine), and eventually exit the map. While Jaguar AvP broke new ground by becoming a nonlinear "simulation" first-person shooter, Lynx AvP was set up to be a traditional "mission-based" FPS, where you accomplish your goal and leave the level ASAP.

The graphics are sharp for a 16-color screen, the movement is similar to Electrocop and very smooth, and the audio is immersive and therefore in some ways similar to the Jaguar ambience. Once again, this game would have been an incredible addition to the Lynx library, and it's a shame Rebellion couldn't have developed this version in parallel to the Jaguar one.

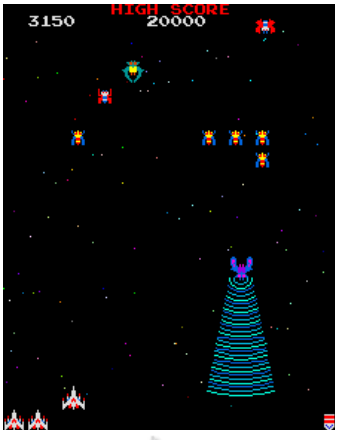
Do you have a favorite "lost" game for the Lynx or Jaguar? Is there a certain genre you'd like to see in future releases? What can Songbird, along with the Atari community, do to better promote new games for these Atari platforms? Write me at songbird@atari.net -- your feedback is very important! And don't forget to pick up some new releases if you've been putting it off. Buying some of the existing new games is always the best way to promote future development.

CGM

Thanks to the ongoing popularity of retrogaming, upgraded remakes of classic games continue to flourish on the PlayStation, Dreamcast and other current consoles. The good folks at Hasbro Interactive (and to a lesser extent, Namco, Activision and other companies) continue transmogrifying skill-based "twitch" games from the early 1980s into multi-level adventure quests for the new millennium. While the results have not always been successful, they rarely fail to be interesting. As a fan of both old school and modern gaming, I thought it would be intriguing to pit 10 of the best classic games head-to-head against their updated counterparts.

ROUND 1

Galaga (Arcade)



vs.

Galaga: Destination Earth (PlayStation)

A decidedly egregious example of how not to modernize an arcade classic, Destination EARTH is pure dreck. The majority of the game is a poorly executed, behind-the-ship perspective shooter in which enemies are hard to distinguish from background objects, and gameplay is about as intense as an NBA game between the Vancouver Grizzlies and the Golden State Warriors. The greatness of Galaga, with its emphasis on timing and well-placed shots, is almost completely lost amid the cluttered 3D, mission-based nonsense. Stick with Galaga '90 for the Turbografx 16 if you want an updated rendition of Galaga that stays true to its roots.

Classic: A+ Modern: D-

ROUND 2

Q*Bert (Arcade)

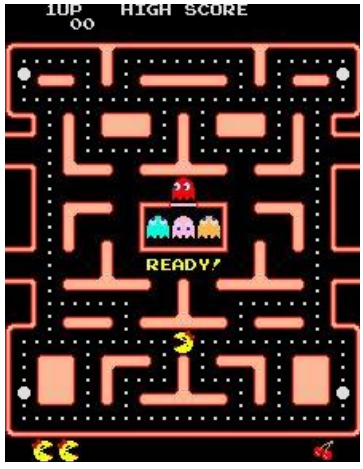
vs.

Q*Bert (PlayStation)

Q*bert is a textbook example of how to properly recreate classic arcade magic on a modern console. The developers managed to keep the fun of the original game intact while expanding on the simple premise. Controls, which work surprisingly well on the PSX dual analog controller, remain the same, as does the concept of hopping on blocks to change their colors. However, the adventure mode gets Q*bert out of his pyramid confines and sends him hopping on gothic castles, foreign villas and other exotic locations. Secrets and strategically placed power-ups enhance the action without bogging down gameplay. And if that isn't enough to quench your thirst for retrogaming, the disc includes a crisply reproduced classic mode and a nifty head-to-head mode.

Classic: B+ Modern: A

Ms. Pac-Man (Arcade)



ROUND 3

vs.

Ms. Pac-Man Maze Madness (Nintendo 64)

Ms. Pac-Man, one of the few early '80s games you can still find on a regular basis in modern arcades, took the Pac-Man concept and cranked it up a few notches with trickier ghosts, more mazes, and faster gameplay. A very good (if sometimes tricky to control) port of the classic game is included in Maze Madness, as is an expansive adventure mode and several fun multi-player games. The adventure mode has simple controls (only the control pad is used), but gameplay emphasizes puzzle-solving over ghost-chasing. Both Ms. Pac-Man and Maze Madness are fun for gamers of all ages, but ultimately Ms. Pac-Man is more absorbing and more challenging.

Classic: A Modern: B+

ROUND 4

vs.

Centipede (ColecoVision)

Centipede (Dreamcast)

The ColecoVision rendition of Centipede is hands down the best way to recreate the arcade classic on your television set. This straightforward port is fast, wildly challenging, and loads of fun. The game utilizes Coleco's Roller Controller trackball to utter perfection. Centipede for the Dreamcast is an overblown adventure game with boring shooting action, repetitive gameplay, and lackluster objectives. Three points of view, two-player split-screen action, and improved (over the PlayStation version) 3D graphics can't help this dull Centipede remake from being a waste of time. A good reproduction of the classic version is included, but without trackball control, the game comes up lacking.

Classic: A+ Modern: D

ROUND 5

vs.

Missile Command (Atari 5200)

Missile Command (PC)

The PC version of Missile Command keeps the classic concept intact while offering mother ships, scrolling screens, off screen enemies, rotating pods, a killer soundtrack, and more. This is a fun game that will challenge those who have mastered or grown tired of the original Missile Command. However, for recreating the excitement of the original arcade game at home, you can't beat the Atari 5200 rendition with its trackball control and faithful rendering of gameplay and graphics. A classic mode is included in the PC package, but using a mouse to guide the cross hairs is less satisfying and less effective than using a trackball.

Classic: B+ Modern: C

At this point in our comparison, classic gaming has a huge lead. Can today's remakes stage a startling comeback? Find out next issue as five more arcade favorites face off against their modern counterparts.

FIGHTING THE GOOD FIGHT!

We Look at the Great, Good, and Not So Good Classic War Games
(Dem's Fightin' Words!)

Let's be honest here: there's no way anyone's going to be doing a complete and comprehensive history of video and computer war games. At least it's not going to be me. There's a tradition that goes all the way back to Avalon Hill and primitive Pentagon WWIII sims, all the way up to modern-day 3-D shooters based on everything from the Battle of Antietam to the Gulf War.

Even if one is going to set out to do a general overview of arcade-style war games, one has to define the parameters. After all, aren't virtually all games based on some kind of struggle? (Granted, I suppose *Dr. J And Larry Bird Go One On One* could just be an exception, along with the old *Strawberry Shortcake* cartridge for the VCS.) For the purposes of this glance at some of my favorites, we're going to define war games as games based on modern-day combat. *Star Wars* won't make it into this category; nor will *Zaxxon, Xevious,* or any number of other space-based games.

In the interest of staying within topic, I'm not going to mention the vague feeling of ridiculousness I feel writing these reviews just as the TV blares details of the latest bombings in Iraq. It feels just a little silly, y'know, while real munitions are raining down from the sky somewhere in the world, to be talking about *Time Pilot*.

But that's just in my head. Your mileage may vary. Now let's dip into the past and blow some stuff up. -Earl Green

DEATH FROM ABOVE

Choplifter!

5200/7800/Home Computers

I have always liked the scenario of this game. A helicopter rescue mission behind enemy lines. The enemy forces have tanks and planes. You must clear a landing area in order to pick up your stranded comrades and fly them back to base to gain points. The problem I have always had with this game is the tricky control. The helicopter has to be maneuvered in a certain way because the rockets only fire straight ahead. So far, the 7800 version has the best control that I have come across on any system.

Rated C+

- Al Backiel

A 2600 version was in the works, but so far it hasn't turned up in any form.

Skyfox

Home Computers

The moment flight simulators were created, it was inevitable – just as with the invention of real aircraft – that someone would attach weapons to them. Countless combat flight sims have hit the shelves, and I am by no means an expert on them all (nor, indeed, am I a fan of the complexity of we've-duplicated-every-switch-in-the-cockpit accuracy). One of my few favorites in that genre, however, was Electronic Arts' *Skyfox* for the Apple II. With its *Defender*-inspired radar screen, as well as an all-knowing flight computer, this futuristic combat sim occupied my time on many a weekend (between *Ultima IV* marathons, that is).

Rated: A

-Earl Green

Time Pilot

Arcade

Before it sounds like I've shut out the arcade classics like a bunch of curious reporters in a Gulf War Pentagon press briefing, I'd be remiss in my duties if I didn't shine a light on one of my personal favorites, the Centuri-licensed Konami classic *Time Pilot.* Though it skirts the edge of breaking my no-sci-fi rule for these reviews with its time travel element, *Time Pilot* pits players against combat aircraft from the 1940s, 1970s, and beyond, until finally one is faced with enemies with equal maneuvering and firepower. A sequel, *Time Pilot '84,* never really enthralled me as much as the original. Coleco latched onto the *Time Pilot* license and ported it to the Colecovision and the VCS, with mixed results. However, to close on a happy note, *Time Pilot* was included on the *Konami Arcade Classics* collection for the PlayStation about a year ago, and it's an excellent emulation. I highly recommend it – and I get my ass kicked by it with startling regularity.

War is hell, ain't it?

Rated: A

-Earl

Chopper Command

Atari 2600

With the advent of such games as *Defender,* it was only a matter of time before game manufacturers turned the clock *back* and graced arcades and home consoles with their oversimplified versions of air combat. Activision's *Chopper Command* puts the player in control of a combat helicopter which must defend a ground-based convoy from enemy bombers. With its miniature "radar" display of the entire playfield, and its premise of defending landbound targets from airborne attack, *Chopper Command* was obviously inspired by *Defender*…but, as far as the VCS was concerned, it was also a better game than Atari's port of the aforementioned arcade hit.

Rating: A

-Earl

Snoopy and The Red Baron

Atari 2600

America's favorite beagle takes to the sky to appease his hallucinogenic vendetta against the Red Baron.

What basically is a Defender/ Chopper Command clone ends up being a rather challenging game. Perched atop his doghouse, the World War I flying ace, Snoopy, flies around doing battle with the Red Baron who has stolen the allies' food supplies. However, the Red Baron is no easy target and makes a worthy adversary. Grab the falling food supplies and shoot down the Red Baron to emerge victorious.

Certainly the best effect in the game is the doghouse being riddled with bullet holes as it is struck.

Rating: A

-Cav

Air Raiders

Atari 2600

Step into the cockpit in this M Network title and blast bogeys out of the sky.

Excellent game requiring you, the pilot, to monitor fuel and ammo levels, dodging enemy flak while maintaining sufficient altitude so you don't slam into the ground. Once you're low on fuel, you must land the plane, re-fuel and take off again to shoot down your extremely passive foes.

The feeling of flight is certainly there, and you can actually feel panic when enemy flak sends you into a tailspin. Just try not to notice that the enemy planes look more like commercial jetliners than vicious MiG Fighters.

Rating: B

-Cav

B-17 Bomber

Intellivision

A pretty complex flight simulator for its time, B-17 Bomber utilizes the Intellivoice peripheral so you can hear your pilot and bombardier shout out (sometimes comedic) commentary relating to the action.

Choose your bombing mission from different points on a map. The further the location, the bigger the point value. Once you're on your way, you must dodge hostile fighters, enemy flak, monitor fuel consumption, while staying focused on your bombing mission. And if you do complete your raid, you have to turn around and get back to base safely.

The fun part is getting to bomb anything you want (including houses and hospitals, much to the very verbal chagrin of your co-pilot).

Rating: A

-Cav

Mission X

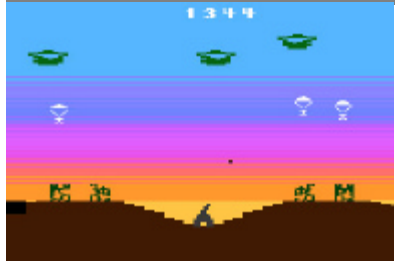
Intellivision

A home adaptation of a rather obscure arcade war game, *Mission X* was among the first games with an "overhead" view of the action to toy with the idea of lowering altitude. Games such as *Defender* and *Scramble* had allowed players to adjust their altitude for a long time, but those games were side-scrolling shooters. *Mission X* was among the first games to indicate altitude by shrinking the size of the player's plane as it got closer to the ground.

Rating: A

-Earl

Commando Raid



Atari

A relatively fun game by U.S. Games/Vidtec. Use your giant gun emplacement to protect your four buildings from paratroopers being dropped from jittery helicopters. Failure to destroy the paratroopers will allow them to overtake your buildings and build a tunnel to destroy your gun.

According to the manual, the paratroopers are "androids" as opposed to people. I guess this was to make us not feel bad about sending them to their deaths.

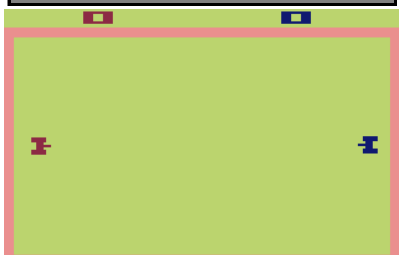
A much better version of this game, *Sabotage,* is playable on the Apple II computer. In *Sabotage,* you have the ability to shoot away the paratroopers' parachutes, sending them to a messy death. Due to the liquid 'Splat!' noise they make, I doubt they are androids. If four of them land safely, they build a human staircase and destroy your gun.

Rating: Commando Raid: B
Sabotage: A

-Cav

Many tanks

Combat



2600

Probably the most common video game cartridge of all since it was the original pack-in game (#2601) with the Atari VCS. Some collectors have so many copies that they could use *them*, instead of Legos, for building blocks. Not that this wasn't a good game, because even though it was very simplistic, it was still a lot of fun. Plus there are many variations on this cart besides tank battles. There are various combinations of air battles from biplanes to jets. Besides the regular tank games, there is Tank-Pong, Invisible Tank, or both. On some games, shots can be straight, guided, or billiard (bounces off sides). The billiard shot is the most fun because you can play bank shots to reach your opponent. The only drawback to this game is that once you get hit, you lose a life and spin around, and it takes too much recovery time. Also, for some strange reason there is a 2 min. 16 sec. time limit on most games. This game is recommended, but like Rodney Dangerfield, "it gets no respect" because it is so common. There are a number of label varieties, but I have never seen one with a picture label.

The tank battles rate a C. The air battles are better and worth a B.

-Al

Thunderground

2600

A Sega release. This one has elements of*Combat* and *Dig Dug*. Basically the objective is to tunnel a path to the targets on the top of the screen so that they can be destroyed. Two tanks pop out at the top of the screen and try to stop you. There is one hidden icon on each screen that is worth bonus points. Some screens have blue tanks that can hone in on you if they detect you. Later levels may add another tank or play out in the open.

Rating C+

-Al

Combat II

2600

The long-lost prototype has been found and placed in the public domain on the Internet. It is currently downloadable and playable on a PC via an emulator. Later on it will be available in cartridge format, but right now, the only playable game is Tanks. The sequel does have improved graphics; instead of just walls, there is a variety of terrain and background scenery.

This one would rate an incomplete.

There are more screen shots and another review by Keita Iida on http://www.atarihq.com.

-Al

Battlezone

Arcade

One of the first truly 3-D games, *Battlezone* has attained truly legendary status. Its modern-day remakes haven't really served it well (actually, they hardly have anything to do with the original aside from the title), and even the best emulators and package titles haven't duplicated the realistic controls or the wonderfully immersive feel of the lumbering giant that was the game's arcade cabinet. But it still stands as a fine example of the genre – and, some might argue, unsurpassed.

Rating: A+

-Earl

Atari created a version of Battlezone for the Army for use as a training device. This game was thought to be extinct, but recently an actual Bradley Trainer turned up in California intact in its original arcade cabinet. You can check out the pix and accompanying article in SYZYGY Magazine #2. A 5200 prototype exists that is incomplete and tries to simulate the vector graphics of the original arcade game.

-Al

Strategy X

2600

A really ugly game. Very blocky. Your tank looks like some sort of insect. The trees look like green stop signs. Konami had to start their home games somewhere I suppose. Anyhow, this is a vertically scrolling game. There are walls to break down and tanks to kill for points. Both can be avoided if you don't mind a low score, because the objective is to reach the fortress and complete the level. You should try to pick them off if you can because they fire a constant barrage. A big problem is that you move in the direction you are firing and this can turn out to cause a collision if you are too close. There is no standing still because the screen continues to scroll. There is a fuel limit, but reserve gas cans are scattered about and generally accessible.

Rating: D

-Al

Battlezone

2600

This is Atari's loosely translated version of their hit arcade game. The original vector graphics had to be replaced with color rasters. What you have here is a first-person perspective looking through the front port window. This enables you to get your bearings and aim the cannon. You could say the controls were a little too sluggish (like a wet sponge), but then a purist would say that was the way a tank should feel when you drive it. But face it, this is a game, not reality. You want your reactions to register immediately. If you can compensate for this, the game is definitely playable. The visuals are pretty sharp. The radar screen is a plus, because you also have to watch your back.

Rating: C

-Al

Robot Tank

2600

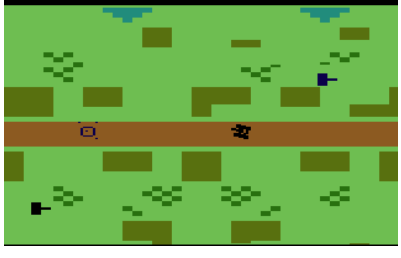
My own personal favorite of this genre and one of Activision's best games. Not only do you face tank opponents, but you get an easier to read radar screen. You can't get shot in the back; you have to be at least facing your opponent. The steering is faster and smoother, and you can suffer damage gradually. An enemy hit can take out its toll on your treads, armor, or firepower. Another cool feature is that the time-of-day changes from dawn to dusk to nighttime. There is a nifty sunrise and sunset and a military timeclock. There is more realism because the tank is also affected by the changing weather conditions. You slide on ice and snow and get bogged down in the mud from the rain. For every 12 tanks you knock off, a tank symbol is added. 12 would have earned you a merit badge from Activision. The most kills I have posted was 81. I always wondered what the max would be, but it was becoming physically impossible to continue due to the increased speed and AI.

Rating: A-

There were three different merit badges available for tanks destroyed (48, 60, 72).

-Al

Armor Battle/Armor Ambush



Intellivision/Atari 2600

Both are 2-player-only Mattel releases. A step up from Combat as far as graphics. Each side starts with two tanks that could be switched on or off as needed, which makes things a little more interesting. Three hits must be fired to knock out a tank. Ricochet fire is optional. The Intellivision release, since it was the original version, is larger and has prettier graphics.

Both rated a C+

-Al

2nd Opinion: I think Armor Ambush is a great two player party game!

I rate it a solid A

-Cav

Tank Brigade/Tanks But No Tanks

2600

Essentially the same game. TB by Panda or Sancho was probably the first incarnation of this game. TBNT by Zimag has almost the same maze, but more colorful graphics. The walls are multicolored and the tanks look a little better. Both games suffer from excessive flickering reminiscent of Pac-Man. These games are easily remembered due to the huge level numbers found on the bottom of each new level. A level consists of eliminating 20 tanks. The outpost on the bottom of the screen must be protected or else it's all over. Both have a bonus screen that has a few scattered barriers instead of a maze, so this attack is a little more out in the open.

Both rated C-, because they do require strategy, but the sluggish (like a wet sponge) control, especially on the second screen, knocks them down a notch. I find that ambushing is the best tactic on the first screen. ***There is another version of TBNT that was released in Europe called Phantom Panzer/Phantom Tank.***

-A

Tank Command

7800

One of the rarer 7800 carts from third party developer, Froggo. This one has full screen detail and looks like early Nintendo graphics. It is a tough game because your tank fires shots in a trajectory. So if you are face-to-face with an enemy tank, you have to back off or dodge it because it is easy to fire over the top and miss it completely. This is very unrealistic because, if anything, it should be the opposite; the further away you are, the larger the trajectory should be. This takes some getting used to. There is also a fuel level that must be maintained.

Rating: C due to the challenge

-Al

Countermeasure

5200

Probably the toughest challenge on this theme. The turret is tricky to position and you face each screen practically in a crossfire. The 5200 joystick does not make it any easier. There is a learning curve that must be met in order to play effectively. This game has the improved graphics of that era, but a lot of it looks like paint splotches. Also, there are some types of terrain that can slow you down even more. There are no extra versions or 2-player mode. There is a failsafe combination that must be collected in bits and pieces and tried out to prevent a nuclear holocaust and win the game. When a code is attempted, the scene shifts to a NORAD-style map of the world showing all incoming missiles converging on the United States.

Rating: B-, mainly due to the better graphics. ***Note the graphic artist's initials are on the skull and cross bones Doomsday screen.***

-Al

Armor Attack

Vectrex

A lot of collectors I know rank this one among their favorite Vectrex games. It is actually a jeep vs. tanks and helicopters battle. The helicopters score the most points and have nice sound effects. The hard core fans of this game know of various "safe zones."

Rating: an easy A. ***This is one of the ones where it is worth having the overlay, because it adds a lot of scenery.***

-Al

Tank Wars

Colecovision

A hard to find cart made by Bit Corp and sold via Telegames and Adam's House. Very fast tanks. The walls consist of bricks and can be knocked down. The home base on the bottom of the screen must be defended at all costs. The quality of game play and graphics are close to early-NES.

Rating: C+

-Al

Armored Encounter

O2

Paired with *Sub Chase,* this is your early, plain vanilla tank game. On a par with Atari's *Combat* with almost as many variations. This one adds land mines on some levels. 2-player only.

Rating: C

Also known as Battle on the Videopac version.

-Al

Ikari Warriors

2600/7800

Similar to *Frontline* in game play, this game has a few more bells and whistles. There are grenades, which can be lobbed at the enemy and helicopters appear on some screens. There is also a tank power-up, as well as rivers and bridges to be crossed.

Rating B+

-AL

Misc...

Rush'n Attack

Arcade

Possibly the best *mano a mano* war game is Konami's 1985 thriller *Rush'n Attack,* which was marketed in the rest of the world as *Green Beret* to be a little more politically correct. (It doesn't take a huge stretch of the imagination to see that the pronunciation of *Rush'n Attack* makes the title a vintage piece of Cold War marketing. *Rush'n Attack* puts the player in the role of a highly-trained soldier behind enemy lines. Schwarzenegger-esque excesses are the name of the game: your soldier/spy is a master of unarmed *and* armed combat, is capable of graceful mid-air acrobatics worthy of a ballet star, and – of course – is expected to take out the entire encampment of enemy troops single-handed. If *Rush'n Attack* had been released in the late 90s, surely it would have had a built-in movie deal with Schwarzenegger or Stallone attached as the star.

Rating: A

-Earl

Air Sea Battle

Atari 2600

One of the earliest games released for the Atari VCS and it shows. Dig those blocky graphics!

Two players man cannons at the bottom of the screen and proceed to shoot things out of the air. There really isn't much more to it than that. Of course, back then it was all we had so we loved the hell out of it.

It doesn't really hold up all that well, but is certainly worth popping in for a quick trip down memory lane. Then again, it's also a good game to crack open a few beers and compete against a friend who, hopefully, cracked open a few more than you.

There's also a few one player versions, but I pray you're never that hard up for entertainment.

Rating: C

-Cav

Sea Battle

Atari 2600

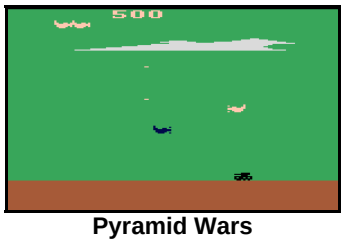
As you can probably tell by the name, Sea Battle is a port of the Intellivision game of the same name. Originally entitled "High Seas," it was scheduled for a 1982 release, but was pulled by the marketing suits at Mattel after deciding they would no longer sell "Two Player Only" games. It ended up being released at the 2000 CGExpo by Intellivision Productions.

The idea is to maneuver four different types of boats -- PT boat, submarine, destroyer, and battleship -- into combat against your adversary. Since each ship has its own strengths and weaknesses, it's a matter of learning which is best in a given situation. When the ships get close to one another, the screen zooms in so the players may engage in heavy battle. Last ship standing wins.

Overall, a simplistic, yet fun 2 player game.

Rating: B-

-Cav



Pyramid Wars

TANK BATTLE HONORABLE MENTIONS

Al Backiel

Tanks A Lot (Emerson Arcadia) - A pretty sophisticated tank game for the era. The walls are made up of bricks. Recommended. This one is similar to the tank strategy/puzzle games seen on larger systems. **Rating: B-**

Panzer Attack (Astrocade) - Teamed with *Red Baron*. This is basically a remake of Atari's *Combat* cartridge, but with a little more graphic detail and color. There isn't as much variety in this one, but the sprites move at a faster rate. **Rating: B**

Desert Fox (Channel F) - Teamed with *Shooting Gallery*, this is one of the earliest tank battles. The graphics are quite primitive (pre-*Combat*). The tanks go through a lot of shape shifting when you turn.

Helicopter Rescue (Videopac+) - Very rare *Choplifter* wannabe released by Philips for their enhanced graphics European O2.

Combat! (Coleco) - This is a cool looking stand alone system that was released during the Pong era. It consists of a 2-player console/controller plus TV hookup. There are 2 pairs of left and right hand levers for steering plus one fire button per side. The console has a camouflage design; the playfield has a lot of obstacles. Drawbacks? It looks like it is only b&w. Sound is from the console, which requires batteries.

There are cameo appearances of tanks in the following games:

Pyramid Wars (2600 *Chopper Command* clone)
Space Jockey (2600)
Turmoil (2600)
Adventures of Tron (2600)
River Raid (5200)

CGM

Review By Brett Weiss

A forerunner of vertical-scrolling Rambo-style games such as Ikari Warriors and Commando, Front Line for the ColecoVision is based on the 1982 Taito arcade semi-classic of the same name. Armed with a rifle and hand grenades, you assume the role of an awkwardly animated (though formidable) foot soldier. Your mission is to destroy an enemy bunker and fort, which are heavily guarded by tanks, enemy soldiers, and a rotating gun. To reach your objective, you must dodge enemy fire and land mines while maneuvering through various cartoonishly drawn, though nicely detailed roads, fields, and deserts. The terrain is littered with barbed wire, craters, rocks, brick walls, and other obstacles.

Throughout the game you can jump into tanks that increase your firepower and maneuverability. The arcade version of Front Line has rotary controls for use in aiming tank fire as well as the other weapons, while the ColecoVision rendition employs the use of the color-coded buttons on Coleco's Super Action Controllers. Using four fingers to rotate your weapons clockwise and counterclockwise is tiring, but effective and fun.

One of the best things about Front Line is that there is more to the game than simply running through it and blasting everyone to hell. A bit of strategy is involved as you must frequently slow to a stop and jump out of your tank in order to aim and throw grenades over obstacles. A two-player simultaneous mode would've added to the strategies and enjoyment of the game, but I suppose that would be asking too much. With a few notable exceptions, most two-player, non-sports ColecoVision games are alternating only. And besides, the arcade version lacks simultaneous play as well.

The action in Coleco's version is less fluid than its arcade counterpart, the scrolling is not as smooth, and the course is a little too short, but like most Coleco-produced arcade simulations for the ColecoVision, it is overall a very good port. Gameplay, graphics, and sound effects are solid. Musically, an inappropriately silly (for a game based on war) musical number plays as the game begins, but after you lose all your lives, you'll hear a moving and entirely appropriate rendition of "Taps."

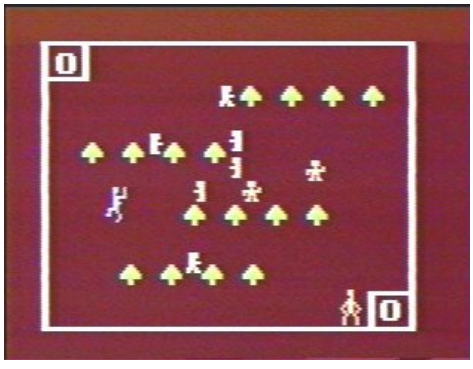
CGM

The Odyssey 2 Goes to War!

By Earl Green
(CGM's resident Odyssey Guru)

Just because Atari had *Combat* and other titles representing the warlike side of the VCS doesn't mean that players couldn't wage war on other systems.

The Odyssey 2 didn't have a large slew of wargames at its disposal. The earliest such title, *Armored Encounter! / Sub Chase!*, wasn't exactly worthy of a newsreel. It basically offered variations on the simple theme of Combat. It did, however, get away from the "*Pong* with tanks" mentality of *Combat* by introducing a submarine game to the mix. For any collectors out there, *Armored Encounter! / Sub Chase!* is still fairly easy to find.



War of Nerves

The coup de grace in the Odyssey's small handful of wargames, however, was the Avalon-Hill-inspired *Conquest Of The World. Conquest* was one of the three Master Series titles that paired what was advertised as an "expanded memory cartridge" (with fancy gold foil labels) in elegant boxes, complete with classy game boards and lots of easy-to-lose pieces. The object of the game was to forge alliances, take over enemies (and, occasionally, allies), and secure more territory around the globe for your Bloc. Only when push came to shove did you resort to the cartridge, which pitted tanks, jets, and missile-spewing submarines against each other. Unlike *Armored Encounter! / Sub Chase!* (or, for that matter, *Combat*), *Conquest Of The World* would occasionally force one player to play a sub while the other played a jet. The sub's advantage? Guided missiles and the ability to submerge out of firing range. The jet's advantage? Being able to fly over land *or* sea to wipe out the sub. The cartridge, in and of itself, was actually a very cool little game. Rather like *Quest For The Rings,* this video game was also playable as a board game. (It's worth pointing out here that the Master Series, far from sparking any interest in hybrid video games, crashed and burned – kind of like my jet did, every time I ran it into the ubiquitous pyramid on the jet vs. jets screens.)

While *Conquest Of The World* may well have been the fanciest of the Odyssey 2 war titles, it wasn't the most innovative. That honor would have to go to *War Of Nerves!,* a strange new take on video war games that scaled the conflict down from a world war to a battlefield skirmish.

In *War Of Nerves,* two players each control a "general" character, guarded by a platoon of four robot soldiers. If either general is captured by the opposition's robots, that round is over, and the game restarts until a series of ten games has been won. Also, the robots clash with one another (with the losers in each struggle being temporarily immobilized). Only that robot's general can repair it by touching it, but that puts the general in danger of being captured by enemy robots. A general can also summon all of his operational robots (when the player presses the action button) toward his location, though this may again result in robot-vs.-robot combat that could diminish one's army.

Bizarrely enough, the generals are **incapable of capturing each other** – meaning that one player could, in theory, maneuver his general into position next to the enemy leader, summon his robots to that location, and win the round. And we won't even mention the forest of little trees, which serve as obstacles to both human and robot.

War Of Nerves! may *sound* easy, but it's actually quite the sweaty-palm game if the right player is behind the wheel of the other army. The computer controls all robot movement and combat, meaning that – short of using the "summon robots" button – the generals, the only characters which the players actually do control, tend to be the most helpless ones on the screen.

Admittedly, the meager Odyssey 2 war game library is weighted down largely by *Combat*-like games with minor variations, but should you get the chance to play *War Of Nerves!* with a suitably vicious opponent, go for it – there hasn't been a game quite like it since.

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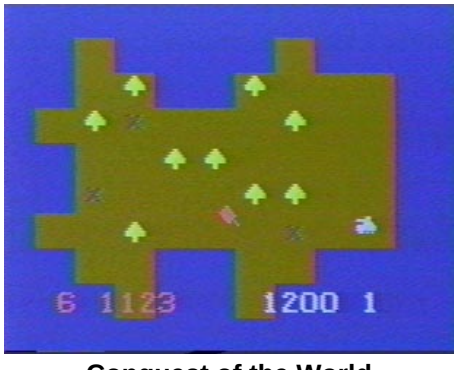

Conquest of the World

Featured Easter Egg!

"Plasma Pong" in Defender 2000 for the Jaguar

Submitted by Randy Femrite (randy@atarijaguar.net)

Enter "NOLAN" in any high score table to activate programmer Jeff Minter's tribute to Atari's founder

fghj k l PqrAH

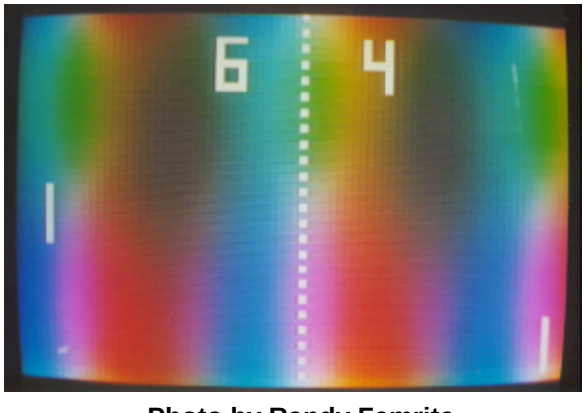

Photo by Randy Femrite

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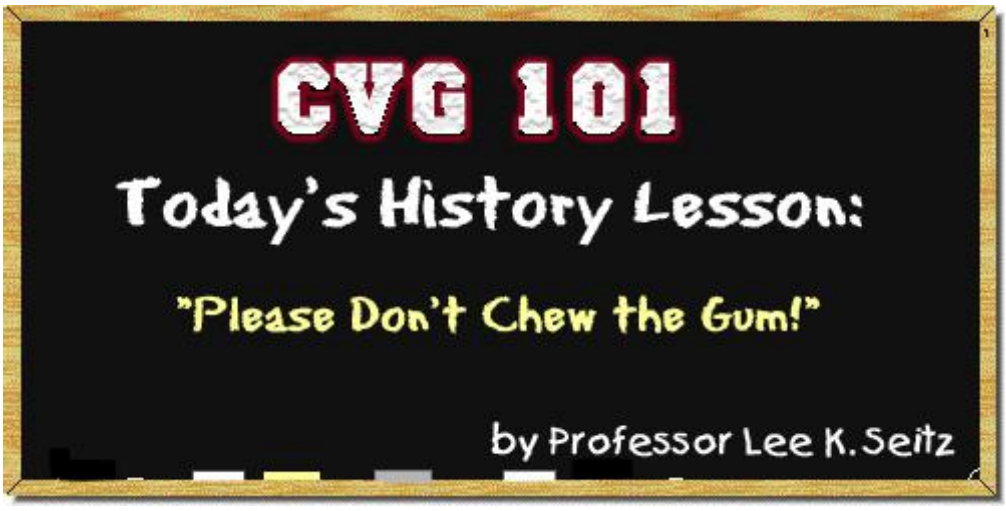
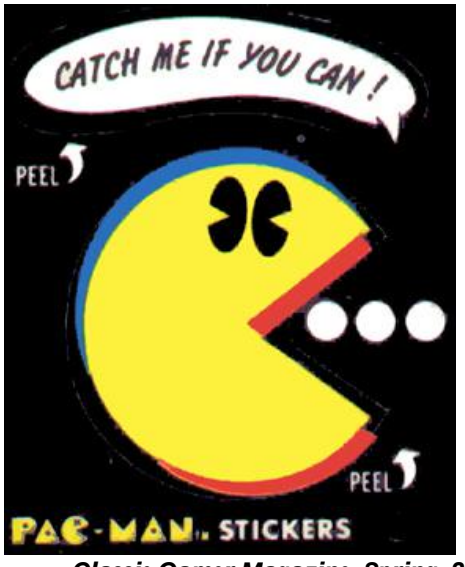


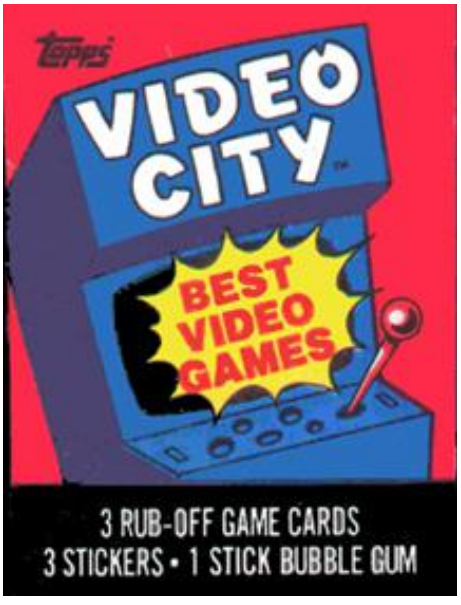
If you're a child of the '80s, you probably bought at least a pack or two of Pac-Man, Donkey Kong, or some other kind of video game stickers. Remember those? They came in wax packs with a piece of pink cardboard masquerading as chewing gum, just like baseball cards. While there were later ones based on characters like Super Mario Bros., for the sake of this article, we'll limit discussion to video games' "Golden Age." (That is, the early 1980s.)

Although there were two different companies making video game related stickers during this time (Fleer and Topps), there are many similarities in the way they were sold. All of them came 36 packs to a box. (Super Pac-Man was also available in boxes of 48 packs.) Each pack (except maybe Dragon's Lair) contained three sticker cards, three rub-off game cards, and the previously mentioned stick of "chewing gum." The packs sold for 25 to 30 cents each.

Fleer started the whole thing by releasing Pac-Man stickers in 1980. Back then, Pac-Man was on everything from mugs to shoes to bed sheets, so it's only natural the trading card industry would try to get in on the action. There were 54 stickers in the set. The front of the stickers generally had black, yellow, or white backgrounds and featured either one or two Pac-Man characters with word balloons or one or two rectangular stickers with sayings on them. The text on several stickers was taken from the lyrics of "Pac-Man Fever" by Buckner and Garcia. ("Slide out the side door"/"I'm cookin' now.") Others were just plain silly. ("Happiness is a hungry Pac-Man.") This may also have been where the words "Waka! Waka!" were immortalized, as they appeared on several stickers.

The backs of the stickers were rather plain. They had the Fleer logo and said "Pac-Man





Sticker No. X of 54." They also contained suggestions for holding contests using the rub-off games. The interesting thing about the backs is that there were a few variations. In my experience, most have blue ink on the back, but you can also find some that are black. In the upper right corner is either the traditional circle-with-a-wedge-missing Pac-Man or the legged Pac-Man from the side art of the coin-op.

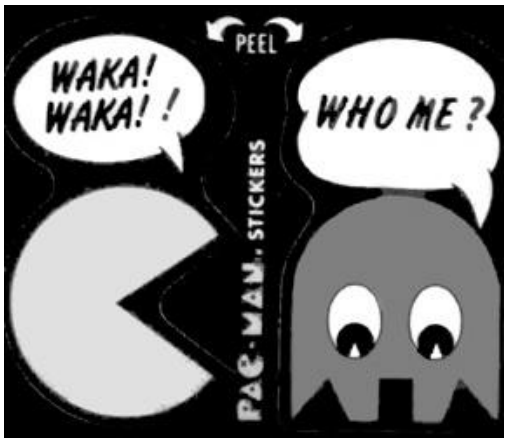
There were also two different styles of front: those that had eyes and those that didn't. That is, you could find the same sticker, but one would have eyes on the Pac-Man and another wouldn't. The Pac-Men with eyes also had blue and red highlights around the edges. My observations show that the cards with the circular Pac-Man on the back have a no-eyed Pac-Man on the front, while the side art Pac-Man on the back has a Pac-Man with eyes on the front. (If you have examples that break this pattern, please let me know.)

As for the rub-off games, they were a simplified version of the Pac-Man maze covered in gold circles. You "moved" through the maze by scratching off the gold circles that filled it, revealing either a dot; blue monster; red, orange, or pink monster; or a cherry. The object of the game was to get through as much of the maze as you could before revealing three non-blue monsters, at which point your game was over. All the other items were worth points, which determined how well you did. There were 28 different rub-off games, so once you had an example of each, you were set to cheat your way through the rest of your rub-off games.

Apparently Pac-Man stickers were a success for Fleer, because in 1981 they released a set of Ms. Pac-Man stickers. Again, they generally featured one or two characters with word balloons or a rectangular sticker with a saying. Looking at them now, from an adult perspective, there was a strong undercurrent of sexual innuendo. ("Ms. Pac-Man does it faster." Pac-Man saying, "I need it bad.") Most stickers had a blue or pink background. The backs of the cards simply stated "Ms. Pac-Man Sticker No. Y of 54" in pink ink. The Ms. Pac-Man stickers did not suffer from the variations that the Pac-Man stickers did. On the fronts, both Pac-People always had eyes. Pac-Man had the red and blue highlights around the edges while Ms. Pac-Man did not.

Since the Ms. Pac-Man arcade game had four different mazes, there were four different mazes for the rub-off games. In addition to the cherry, the Ms. Pac-Man games also had pretzels and bananas. The basic premise remained the same. The backs of the games came printed in either blue or black ink. I have never seen a count of the unique game cards for any sticker series other than Pac-Man, so I do not know how many different Ms. Pac-Man games there were. The same goes for all of the sets described below.

Fleer's last set of Pac-Man stickers was Super Pac-Man in 1982. It was more of the same on the front. Once again, the



Pac-People all had eyes. The backgrounds were red, blue, purple or divided into three stripes of purple, white, and pink. The backs this time all promoted a Pac-Man poster contest. They featured either a child wearing a Pac-Man hat, a girl wearing a Pac-Man shirt, or a boy holding a Coleco Pac-Man tabletop game. I'm uncertain if you could find the same sticker with different backs. It was pointed out to me by Geoff Voigt at Classic Gaming Expo 2000 that if you turn all the fronts to face the same way, some of the backs will be upside down! Because the stickers don't tell you how many there were in the series, I'm not sure, but there were at least 40. From the previous two sets, I'd say 54 would be a good guess. The rub-off games this time were all the same maze, but there were gates in the maze that you were not permitted to go through unless you revealed a key nearby. There was also a large gold oval in part of the maze that might direct you to the scratch-off "super speed button" at the bottom of the card for bonus points.

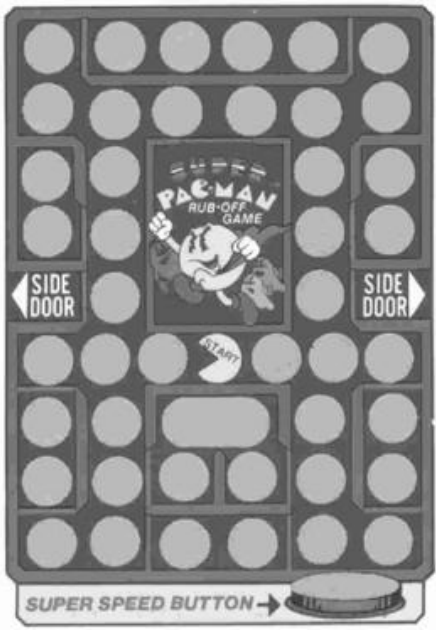
Nineteen eighty-two was also the year Topps got their chance to cash in on the video game phenomenon. They acquired the license to produce Donkey Kong stickers. There was no set layout for the front of the stickers, which featured various corny sayings. ("Jump Man at work." "I'm ape over Donkey Kong.") The backs of each sticker featured a piece of one of two pictures. It took 15 stickers to make a complete picture. There was a 16th sticker for each puzzle that showed what it should look like when completed, so there was a total of 32 cards.

There are four different styles of rub-off games, one for each board of the arcade game. The object is to get to the girl at the top without revealing a combination of three fireballs and barrels. That's right, there are both fireballs and barrels on every card, even though barrels only appeared on the first screen of the coin-op.

One thing about the Donkey Kong stickers people don't know is that a slightly different version of them was included in specially marked packages of Donkey Kong cereal. The fronts are identical to those found in the packs. The puzzle pieces on the back, however, are oriented vertically instead of horizontally, and it takes fewer of them to make a complete picture. The two pictures were the same, however. Each picture was made of only nine stickers, plus a tenth one showing the completed picture. Thus, a complete set of these would be 20 stickers. Good luck finding them, though.

The next year, in 1983, Topps released their Video City stickers. Instead of featuring a single, highly popular video game, this series of stickers featured four moderately successful ones: Donkey Kong Jr., Frogger, Turbo, and Zaxxon. A complete set consists of 28 stickers: seven for each game. However, describing the seven is a bit complicated, so bear with me. There were four stickers that had a portion of a larger picture on the back, similar to the Donkey Kong stickers. Then there was a fifth sticker showing the completed puzzle on the back. The catch is that the front of this fifth sticker was identical to one of the first four. For most of the games, it's the same as the one with the lower left puzzle piece on it, but for Frogger, it's identical to the upper right piece. The sixth sticker front is the same graphic as the complete puzzle and has playing tips for its arcade game on the back. Then, there's a seventh sticker for each game that is also the same as the puzzle, but has a special subscription offer for *Electronic Games* magazine on the back. The rub-off games are much simpler to keep track of. There's only one board design per game. In the case of Donkey Kong Jr., which had multiple screens, Topps used only the first screen.

Finally, Fleer got back into the act one final time with Dragon's Lair stickers in 1984. I have to admit, I never even knew these existed until a few years ago. Most of the stickers featured art from the game, some with an extremely corny word balloon ("Please don't squeeze the Dirk.") and some with just a label naming the featured character. Some didn't feature any art from the game at all, just a saying. The backs of the stickers featured playing tips for the game. Some game tips were repeated on multiple stickers. According to the front of the stickers, there were 63 in a set.



I'm not sure anyone knows how many Dragon's Lair rub-off games there are. They featured art from the game as their backgrounds. The problem is there are *at least* two dozen different backgrounds used. Unlike all the other rub-off games mentioned here, instead of circles, they have solid paths that branch. A nice change of pace after all those circles.

Now that you know what's out there, you might wonder where to find these

stickers. First, there are the usual sources: other collectors and eBay. You might also try comic book and trading card stores. Geoff Voigt let me in on an online merchant that he doesn't mind sharing named Marchant Non-Sports Cards (www.marchantcards.com or www.nscards.com). Their prices for Donkey Kong and Video City are very reasonable. The prices on the rest might give you pause. Just remember, no matter where you manage to find your stickers, please don't chew the gum!

If collecting stickers isn't up your alley, but you'd like to give them a glimpse or know what they say, try these web sites:

CGM

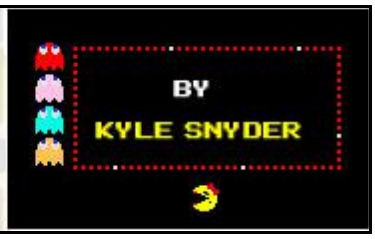
Donkey Kong
http://www.ohio.voyager.net/~ngsippel/cv/donkeykong.txt

Dragon's Lair
http://www.tomheroes.com/Video%20Games%20FS/Arcade/dragon's_lair_cards.htm
http://www.dragons-lair-project.com/community/merch/
http://bioinfo.mshri.on.ca/people/feldman/vgmuseum/cards/dlruboff.html

Pac-Man
http://home.hiwaay.net/~lkseitz/cvg/pac_stick3.html

Author note:
Many thanks to Geoff Voigt for his help in researching this article. You can also thank (or blame) him for letting us use his title.

The STORY of a happy child and a cabaret Ms.PacMan



In addition to tons and tons of classic home video game consoles, I also collect the full size coin-operated models. I currently have six machines crammed into a small "game room" in my apartment. One of these, and the one that gets the most play from visitors, is Ms.Pac-Man.

But this isn't your average run of the mill Ms. Pac-Man. This is a cabaret Cabinet, also known as a "mini-upright." It's about two thirds the size of a normal full size upright, sports a handsome woodgrain finish, and is played on a bright 13" color monitor.

Why a cabaret? Well, I'll tell you...

Picture it. Sicily. 1933. Your grandfather and me...

OH WAIT A MINUTE!!! I slipped into a "Golden Girls" flashback! My bad! Here's what I meant...

Spring 1982. A neighborhood in Southern Maryland named "Cliffton on the Potomac." A sleepy Sunday morning, around 10 a.m. or so. An eight year old boy is enjoying his breakfast of scrambled eggs and toast, the latest issue of "Electronic Games" opened before him. His parents are milling about, doing whatever it is moms and dads do while their child is oblivious. Dad comes into the room and announces that he will be back in a few minutes as he's leaving to get the Sunday paper. They know he won't be gone long. A small family owned general store is about a mile away, at the edge of the neighborhood. Moments later, the boy finishes breakfast just as Dad enters the front door.

Dad tells his son that the store has two arcade games now, Missile Command and something new called "Ms. Pac-Man." He further explains that Ms. Pac-Man has a different maze than Pac-Man, and she seems to move faster than her predecessor. The boy is skeptical at first, as his father is quite the master of the wacky story. How foolish! A GIRL Pac-Man???? But nevertheless, youthful curiosity overtakes him, and he asks his father to take him to go see it. The two climb back into Dad's Ford Ranger to make the short drive.

Upon walking in the front door of the store, the boy looks to his right and sees... MS.PAC-MAN!!! WOW!!!!! LOOK AT THIS!!!!! A NEW MAZE!!!!! SHE'S GOT A BOW IN HER HAIR, AND... COOL!!!! THE CHERRIES ARE BOUNCING AROUND!!!! For a second, the boy is snapped back to reality when his father reminds him that he forgot to say hello to the kindly grandmother who runs the store. Once the boy corrects this oversight, he is rewarded with a few quarters.

The music starts, NEAT!!!! A BRAND NEW THEME!!! Suddenly, Ms. Pac starts to gobble up the dots. The boy literally drinks in the experience. The sounds of the dot gobbling are higher pitched than "regular" Pac-Man. The ghosts look the same, but the maze itself is much brighter and filled in with an orangeish-pinkish-tan color. The "T" shaped walls directly beneath where Ms. Pac starts the game look just like the ones in Pac-Man, but flipped upside down. HEY! There's that bouncing cherry! In a frantic attempt to run down the escaping prize, Ms. Pac-Man is intercepted by Pinky. Ms. Pac-Man rolls over a few times, disappears, and her replacement starts in the center of the maze again, just south of the monster house.

The boy then notices a familiar sound to his left... the six-tone siren of a game of Missile Command starting up. His attention is diverted for a moment, just long enough to notice his father trying his hand at the Missile Command machine sitting next to the Ms. Pac-Man. The father looks at his son, and smiles. No words are needed. The father rarely plays video games and tends to get annoyed at his son's constant discussion of them, but this simple and powerful moment of father-son bonding will stay with the boy for the rest of his life (though he doesn't know it yet!).

The father manages to defend his cities well enough to survive a wave or two of missiles, just long enough for the boy to play through his quarters. They turn and say goodbye to the grandmotherly woman running the store, and upon returning home, the boy rushes to his room, gets out his coloring pencils and sketch paper and begins to draw the fabulous new video game his father just took him to play.

As he draws, he reflects that the Ms. Pac-Man machine is shorter than any other arcade game he had seen up until that point. Certainly shorter than the large yellow Pac-Man cabinets he was used to, and even shorter than the squatty Missile Command cabinet to its left. He thinks that maybe Midway is trying to save manufacturing costs by making the machines smaller. He goes back to drawing his sketch again.

Fast forward to the late 90's. The boy, now a 24 year old man with a full time job and a townhouse he shares with a friend, begins to look for some arcade games to start his collection with. Always looking for bargains, he gets a Kung Fu Master for $50, a Two Tigers thrown in with that for free, a Trivia Whiz for $100, and a few more here and there. Several times, the opportunity to purchase a full size Ms.Pac-Man or one of those cocktail table cabinets presents itself, but he passes each time. He wants that same size and style of Ms. Pac-Man he first saw. They prove to be much more elusive than he'd expected. Then, one day he logs onto the Video Arcade Collecting newsgroup on the internet at the right time, minutes after a seller in New Jersey posts a mini upright Ms. Pac-Man for a very reasonable price. He contacts the seller, and the following weekend, he is playing that little woodgrain Ms. Pac-Man in his own home.

He thinks back to that Sunday morning, 18 years prior, when his Dad took him to play his first game of Ms. Pac-Man, and ended up playing a game of Missile Command alongside his son. The young man smiles, and decides to call home and tell his father... "Thanks," and that he loves him.

CGM

Video gamers are always interested in finding out what new games are coming out for their systems. It's nice to get a sneak preview by seeing some screen shots and descriptions. It is a natural curiosity, because one might consider a particular game as a future purchase or maybe getting it as a gift on a special occasion. To find out if the game is worth springing for, you have to trust the game magazines, and even then you have to be skeptical that they aren't just giving out good reviews so as not to offend the advertisers. The video game clubs were sometimes privy to exclusive information. To join some of these clubs all you had to do was send back the registration card that came with the system or game. This is always a good idea because sometimes you get free promo items. Here is a list of the early game clubs that I have had experience with. Perhaps you may recall some of these:

ATARI GAME CLUB - This video game club was definitely worth belonging to. *Atari Age* was originally a newsletter (more like a newspaper) and later went on to become a magazine. There were articles on the latest games for the 2600 & 5200, including those that they were working on. Unfortunately, there weren't any interviews with programmers since it was against company policy. There were puzzles and the obligatory catalog of game accessories for sale to members. By far the best items they had for sale were the Club exclusives. Games like Crazy Climber, Quadrun, and Rubik's Cube were only available from the club. Other games like Waterworld and Atari Video Cube were first available here before being released to the stores. Swordquest contestants had an advantage because they could buy their games early and have more time to work on the solution.

ATARIAN VIDEO GAME CLUB - This was the resurrected Atari club that came into existence from the renewed interest in video games following the introduction of the NES. Atari had released their 7800 and some additional 2600 games. The club magazine was called the Atarian and membership entitled you to a subscription, membership card, and patch. Only 3 issues were published. There were two different "premiere issues" just to confuse things. I wonder if Cav got his inspiration from them. There was an "Atari Advantage" sales promotion that offered games and prizes. All to no avail, the NES had cornered the market and Atari was eventually sold. Unfulfilled subscriptions were paid off in carts (e.g. Radar Lock, Road Runner), which was cool.

ATARI VIDEO CLUB - This is a small club, not actually affiliated with Atari. There is no membership card that I recall. A club newsletter called *The Atari Zone* containing news, reviews and game competitions comes out occasionally. Owner Dan Iacovelli started this group back in 1989. In the old days, Dan received insider information from Atari. Today, the publication gets most of its hot news from Jaguar and Lynx developers. The text is a bit unpolished, and it doesn't look like it gets proofread or spell-checked. I suggest a free sample issue, which may be downloaded, to see if it is your cup of tea. The club has its own website and is also part of a Jag user site. Dan can be reached at Dan-Avc@usa.net or http://avconline.atari.org.

NUMB THUMB CLUB - This was the Imagic's game club. The free magazine was called the *Numb Thumb News.* Only 2 issues were published before it banged up due to the crash of '84. They weren't afraid to mention the most common video game injury. There was the usual game news and interviews, some game tips, and a few items for direct sale.

ACTIVISION (various) - Had a "club" for almost every game. By achieving a qualifying score in *Dragster,* for example, you received a merit badge and enrollment in the **World Class Dragster Club**. For *Freeway* it was the "**Save the Chicken Foundation.**" For *Skiing* it was the "**Activision Ski Team**" etc*. Activisions* was their magazine and newsletter.

COLECOVISION VIDEO CLUB - All registered CV owners got their first issue of the *ColecoVision Experience* and became charter members. There were 4 issues produced when the CV was in its heyday. You got the newest scoop on the ColecoVision and the Adam Computer.

ODYSSEY ADVENTURE CLUB - Magnavox had an O2 owners magazine called *Odyssey Adventure,* of which there were 5 issues produced. The O3 was hinted at. The first issue was free for the returned registration card. There were plenty of articles on Ed Averett, their prolific programmer.

GAMELINE ACADEMY OF VIDEO ARTS - I was not actually a member of this club. I had debated joining until I saw that they were offering games that I couldn't play or get anywhere else. The membership cards came with the Gameline system that I had found in a video store many years later. The Gameline was a modem that was used to dial up their company and download whatever games you wanted from their catalog. This would not be a permanent copy as you were limited to a certain number of plays per load. The one game they had that was an exclusive was a Spectravision prototype called *Snowplow.* This was the only time this game was shown to the public. No one seems to know what happened to it. CVC was only in service for about a year. They eventually became better known as, and evolved into, AOL.

VECTREX OWNER'S CLUB - I don't know if there was an actual membership card. Only one issue of the newsletter *PASSPORT* made it out the door.

GAMESMAN CLUB - The Gamesmen was (and still is) an Australian chain of video game stores. At one time or another they carried every major game system. The membership card was given out as a discount card to frequent purchasers. Members received by mail, on a regular basis, their latest full color catalog. (Sort of how Electronics Boutique operates today.) The Gamesmen was noted for being a source for the 2600 Pal carts that were not available in the US (e.g Klax). One of their major suppliers was HES, who licensed and repackaged a lot of Activision titles.

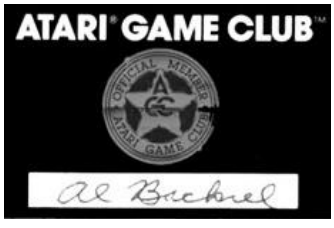
FUNCOLAND FUN CLUB - Funcoland is the U.S. chain of stores that sells new games, but they are more well known for selling second hand games at bargain prices. I just received a notice and a new card from them saying that the new card was good for discounts at several other stores such as Babbages, Software Etc., and Game Stop. It is now issued by *Game Informer,* which is an excellent and unbiased magazine. They recently changed their format and page size and it looks like they have more PC coverage. I thought it was fine the way it was and maybe they should have left it alone.

NINTENDO FUN CLUB - This was the original name. The publication was *The Nintendo Fun Club News*. That was before I joined. Now it is:

THE NINTENDO POWER CLUB - Membership got you a subscription to *Nintendo Power*, a card, and a Mario pin. Nintendo Power had what everybody else had as far as game news and items for sale. It is still being published today, and they are now actually giving honest reviews and ratings for third party software, which is surprising. It was not always that way. They give out a lot of free promotional items like guidebooks and demo tapes, trading cards, stickers, and posters that you can't get by buying the magazine on the newsstand. I love to get freebies. The magazine is a slick publication that was once even done in 3-D. Lately it has been too kiddie due to the Pokèmon craze.

Intellivision, as far as I can tell, never had a club or magazine. There was a fanzine called *Intellivision Lines* by Ralph Linne that was around for a while. INTV Corp, the company that bought the rights to the Intellivision, sent out color catalogs showing their new games. Some NES third parties (e.g. Acclaim, FCI, Electronic Arts) had their own publications.

I'm sure that I may have missed a few of the early video game clubs or company publications. Please don't feel slighted because I didn't mention one of your favorites. If you know of others, feel free to contact me at **albackiel@aol.com.** I could use more info about early club activity, especially those outside the US. Today the only other club that I was considering was the one for the PlayStation. It is not free, but they send you demo disks that allow you to play several levels of a game. I would like to close with a bit of wit. As Groucho Marx once said, "I refuse to join any club that would have me as a member."



The Best Atari 2600 Games (THAT NEVER EXISTED)

By Tim "Sniderman" Snider

Some do it to fulfill a fantasy of a game they wish had existed. Some do it just to see if they can create something that reminds them of past joys. Others just want to mess with your head.

They are the creators of fake Atari labels. Surprisingly, there are several web sites dedicated to labels for games that were never made. But you couldn't tell from the labels posted. These fake labels look factory-fresh and straight from the Atari art department - ready to be slapped on the newest cart.

Approaching Doom

The fake label that most classic game collectors seem to be familiar with is the infamous "Atari 2600 Doom Hoax" perpetuated by James Catalano of Chicago. James created the box art, screen shot, and label for the non-existent id Software game as a project for a 2-D imaging class he was taking in college. His assignment was to create an ad for any product - real or imaginary. James said he remembered the fun he had with his Atari and decided to do an ad campaign based on a "new" game release for the system.

"I was into Doom big time back then, being hooked on the Sega 32X version before I ever played the PC version," he said.

James said he simply used a PC with Photoshop to create his world-renowned hoax. The fake game was well-received in class and he put the images up on the Internet. And that's when the speculation and rumors took on a life of its own.

Thinking it was real, collectors and game players flooded the newsgroups and message boards asking about the availability of the game. Eventually, word got out that the images were nothing more than mock-ups of a fond video game wish.

The flurry of activity got so bad, several people began to claim to either own a prototype of the phantom ROM or take credit for the 2600 Doom art.

"The worst it got was when this idiot who called himself 'Fragmaster' put up his own site claiming to have done the hoax," James explained. "When I found out about this, I sent him an e-mail telling him to either take down the site or give proper credit to who actually created it. To me, he was a real jerk, being that he didn't respond to my e-mail, nor did he

take down the site or give proper credit to the origin of the hoax."

James does digital work like scanning, enlarging, image manipulation, and printing for a production studio that does evidentiary work for several law firms. When he's not doing digital imaging professionally, he's doing it recreationally.

"I love digital imaging," James said. "What I like doing a lot is shooting my various toys, models, and action figures (namely Star Wars stuff) with my digital camera, then creating backdrops for these images with various 2-D and 3-D imaging programs, blending them together and adding various visual effects to make the scene look real." (To see some of his Star Wars digital imaging, check out his Star Wars photo page at: **http://members.tripod.com/jims_digital_domain/starwars.htm.)**

James said that he collects Atari 2600 carts "off and on" and has a collection of 218 games for it.

"I used to collect a lot from Frank Polosky's Video Magic, but that sort of stopped when nothing 'new' was being offered," James said. "After that, I tried eBay for a few carts, but found the prices getting too crazy. So for now, for the few games I want, I just settle for playing them in emulation with Stella on my PC."

James said that he's tinkered with other Atari-themed hoaxes, but nothing's come to fruition.

"I did try again with a Tomb Raider for 2600, but that one didn't go anywhere," he said. "I did think about doing a Mortal Kombat 2 for 2600 hoax but never found the time to sit down and create the screen graphics."

Believe it or not, I'm making a fake

Lee Krueger of Samammish, WA is no stranger to Classic Gaming circles, having one of the larger collections of classic videogame-related paraphernalia. He claims to have a complete or near complete cartridge collection of Atari 5200, Atari 7800, Lynx, Jaguar, Colecovision, Vectrex, and Intellivision consoles and carts. One of the greatest things he said he had in his collection was the original Intellivision computer as well as all the cassettes (some even shrink-wrapped) for the machine.

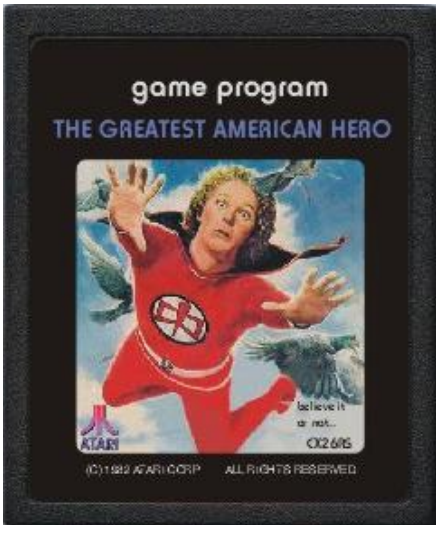
"I do have a number of Atari prototypes too," he brags. "But my first love is the Atari 2600. It has special meaning for me, as it was the last gift my father gave me before he passed away. At the present time, I think my Atari 2600 cart collection is over 700."

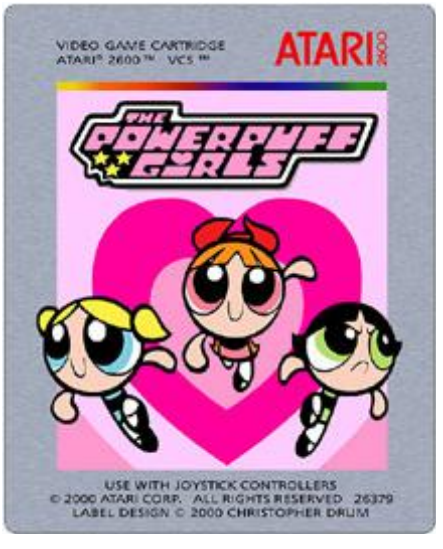
Lee's ResQSoft website has a corner dedicated to the Atari 2600 games seen only in his mind. There, you'll fine the "Greatest American Hero" game (rumored to have been in development, but never released or found in ROM form), "Planet of the Apes," and "Aliens vs. Predator."

"I really try to make labels that are representative of what they may have looked like if they were released," Lee said. "My goal is to make them look authentic. My favorite labels are the ones that look the most like Atari-era carts."

Lee uses an Apple iMac and Corel Draw to create his fake labels.

"I find it to be a very good program for these types of things," he said. "I really bought Corel to do the artwork and layout for the 'Worship the Woodgrain' project. In the course of designing the layouts, I found it fun to make mock-up labels."




VIDEO GAME CARTRIDGE
ATARI 2600 VCS
ATARI
THE POWERPUFF GIRLS
USE WITH JOYSTICK CONTROLLERS
© 2000 ATARI CORP. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED 26379
LABEL DESIGN © 2000 CHRISTOPHER DRUM

"One label in particular was done around the same time that a friend of mine had interviewed a former Atari 2600 programmer who now works at Microsoft - John Marvin," Lee continued. "John had made "Crypts of Chaos" and several other games that weren't released. Among these was a game called "Planet of the Apes." I had just finished watching the complete series on TV at the time and thought that it'd be cool to make a label for this unreleased game."

Lee keeps creating new labels for non-existent games, though he has created labels for real-life ones too.

"I just made one last night for the special cart version of NWCGE Space Invaders. It will be one of the fabulous prizes for the Atari 2600 Championship down at the Hi-Score Arcade," he said. "I am also working with Chad Schell on the artwork for the SuperDuperCharger."

Lee is an aerospace engineer at Boeing where he works in a group called Computational Structures Technology. His expertise is in the field of multi-body dynamics.

"I do a lot of consulting for all Boeing divisions: commercial airplanes, space station, etc.," he said. "As you can tell, I am far-removed from being a graphics designer."

Autobots, transform!

Christopher Drum of San Francisco, CA is a professional graphic artist for Macy's. Although he's just a beginning Atari 2600 collector ("I really only have the games available from O'Shea's Ltd. and a pretty rough looking copy of Decathlon," he said), Christopher has created several slick-looking fakes for Animé and cartoon-related Atari games. Games like "Akira," "Astro Boy," and "Macross" are featured on his web site.

Ironically, Christopher started making fakes after initially designing a label for a recently-discovered game. "There was a contest being held at Atari 2600 Nexus, if memory serves, for the Kabobber ROM instructions. The winner had done a GREAT job replicating the writing style and design of the original Activision stuff," Christopher recalls. "I felt kind of sorry for Kabobber, because all it was missing was the label artwork to make it 'complete.' So, I took it on myself to do it. I wanted it to be absolutely authentic, so that someone could burn a homebrew and have a good quality label to print from their inkjet."

Christopher said that upon finishing that project, he began to fantasize about games he wished had been released for the Atari 2600.

"Most of them were old animé shows," he said. "It was very easy to obtain artwork for use on the labels by focusing my attention on the animated side of things. Still, all of the artwork I used was modified in some way to accommodate the labels... either items were re-composited, or redrawn, or re-colored to fit the style I was looking for."

Christopher explains that all the layouts for his labels were done in Freehand 8. Occasionally, he said he has to composite many pieces of artwork together to get one image he likes.

"The 'Evangelion' label, for instance, was two different pictures (if memory serves) composited to create something label-shaped," he said. "The Akira artwork was a scan of a large poster I found on-line. The scan was horribly dark and muddy, but my skill with Photoshop (that's all I do all day long at Macy's) allowed me to bring it back to life."

Christopher said that he's definitely going to be making more labels. One of his more recent creations was a label for the newly-discovered "Combat 2" ROM. He said he'd like to do more labels for existing games.

"Things I'm mulling over presently are: RealSports Basketball, Sinistar, Tempest, Twin Peaks (I just think the concept of a Twin Peaks Atari game is funny), Save Mary, and Ewok Adventure," he said.

Classic game collection-wise, Christopher said he is trying to put together an original Infocom grey-box set.

"I still silently kick myself every now and then for getting rid of my Coleco Adam too," he groaned.

For the do-it-yourselfer...

Rather than make fake labels himself, Rick Cook of Nashville, TN, makes it possible for YOU to create your own real-looking Atari falsehoods. On his classic game web site, Retro Goodness, he has a section called "Forge Your Own 2600 Carts." Everything you need is there - from blank Atari labels (from a variety of companies and years) to the appropriate Atari fonts.

"'Forge Your Own 2600 Carts' actually started as a fun little side page of Retro Goodness," Rick said. "My girlfriend's kid had never seen a Commodore 64 before, and when I told him 'These were state-of-the-art computers several years ago,' he gave this half laugh/snort sound. (Snot-nosed brat!) So that is why I put up my shrine to the systems of yesteryear."

Rick is a technical support analyst for Gambro Healthcare Patient Services, a provider of dialysis services all across the United States.

"When the computers or network crash, we are the lucky nerds they call," he said.

Rick doesn't really call himself a "collector" per se, seeing as he still owns all his original Atari systems and carts from when he first purchased them.

"Collector? Maybe. Obsessed fan? Ohhhhhh yeah!" he said.

Where to See the Fakes

James Catalona's Doom for Atari 2600 hoax page is located at http://members.tripod.com/jims_digital_domain.

Lee's ResQSoft web page is located at http://home.earthlink.net/~resqsoft.

Christopher Drum's web page is located at http://homepage.mac.com/christopherdrum/.

Rick Cook's Forge Your Own web page is located at www.retrogoodness.com.

Yet another Atari fake label site is dedicated to label *re-makes* of exsisting games. (Even this article's author has one posted!) The A-1 Fancy Label Club Gallery can be located at http://www.geocities.com/SoHo/Workshop/2663/gallery.html.

My Twenty Five Cents

by Damien Quicksilver

How I Found My Video Game Soul

Some say that no one is born with a soul. Some believe that one has to earn a soul. The soul is an essence deep inside, though reflected on the outside. No matter how well one draws, they are no artist until they can create images in their head that never existed before. A man can learn instruments and musical notation, but he is no musician until he can hear a song in his head that no one has heard before. When men like these see, hear, and feel the essence of what the love deep down in the core of their beings, they KNOW they have a soul.

But what does it take for a gamer? How can we look within and know what's there? Surely joysticks and high scores alone do not give a man a soul. So what then? Can one achieve video game enlightenment? Travel to a video Valhalla? Find gamer's salvation with a cyber-Jesus and electric-Buddha? I traveled to video game hell and back.

Here's my story:

It started years ago with VGB (Virtual Gameboy Emulator).

I realized that I could, from the comfort of my own computer, find and download Game Boy games from all over the Internet. Computer games never quite "did it" for me. Console games were always simpler, and more fun for me. But now I could have all the Game Boy games I wanted, and I didn't even have to buy them.

BWAHAHAHAHA...

But it didn't stop there. Emulator technology improved, and I upgraded my computer. As the years passed, there were more and more games at my fingertips. Soon after Gameboy emulators, more emulators hit the scene... Atari 2600, NES, Sega Master System/Game Gear, Colecovision, the list goes on and on...

And, of course, that was not the end either. Further upgrades of both emulation technology and my computer's motherboard yielded Super Nintendo, Genesis, and TurboGrafx-16 to the bunch. I had several hundred games.

Then, over a thousand.

I finally gave away my consoles, having determined that they were superfluous pieces of archaic hardware. There was no way I could have foreseen the scope of that mistake...

And my descent to video game hell.

I had sold my soul to the Tramiels* and I never knew it. I slowly lost my urge to play video games. My playing had slowed to a near halt. Gaming had lost its flavor, and I didn't even know why. Finally, when I had no rational recourse left, I sold my computer in an attempt to find salvation.

Hallelujah! I was to begin to see the light...

One day, I found a game for the PlayStation called "Jumping Flash" on sale for 99 cents. My brother had a PlayStation. I had a dollar. I had never heard of the game but thought, "At that price, how can I not?" I got home and I played that game for hours. Don't think I'm recommending it or anything! This actually was only a mediocre game at best. But this experience epitomized the soul of gaming that I had lost over the years of emulation. It made me remember: You can have fun playing a game, even if it's not that good.

You ever go to an all-you-can-eat buffet? You ever go from dish-to-dish, trying out all the different things? And even if you find something you like, you don't stick with it, because you're still trying other things. I mean, no matter how good it is, with that much variety, you probably have something better available, right? But then you get filled up, and you don't even want to eat any more.

I'll tell you right now that I probably never played half of the games I had for emulation. I had TOO MUCH variety. I would go through and play each game for five or ten minutes. Two hours and ten-to-twenty games later, I would be "filled-up;" exhausted and tired of playing video games.

But that's only on the surface of my realization. Deeper inside, I realized that playing this Jumping Flash game was "real." And I can't even quantify what makes it so. Emulators sometimes don't have the color or sound right-on with that of consoles, but it's more than that...

It's the FEEL.

It's the essence.

It's the fact that somewhere, deep down inside, we know when something's real or not.

Just as margarine will never replace butter.

Just as Miracle Whip will never replace mayonnaise.

Emulation will never replace consoles.

For the same reason Neo wanted to escape the Matrix... Because I have a soul, and you just can't replace REALITY.

*(In case you don't understand, that's my way of saying "Video-Game devil" without any further use of video, game, or both as a prefix.)

CGM

History Has a Funny Habit of Repeating Itself

BY DAVE NEUBURGER

I was looking around on the Internet recenty, trying to dig up some new information on Microsoft's latest video game opus, and I stumbled across some information on the guns Nintendo is bringing to bear. The time is quickly approaching high noon, and those gunfighters who have no more fight left in them have gone indoors with the townsfolk. Straight out of the old spaghetti western classic A Fistful of Dollars, a three way standoff is about to take place. Sony with it's PS2, Nintendo with its GameCube, and of course Microsoft with the X-Box.

Long ago, Nintendo had vanquished its old nemesis Atari (who came to battle with a banana and a pointed stick) in a display of swordplay so furious the Dread Pirate Roberts would have applauded the skill of the combatants. Well as the saying goes, *It Was a New Day Yesterday, But It's an Old Day Now* (Jethro Tull song for those of you scratching your heads), and there are new battles to be fought. Unfortunately, while the rest of the world has moved on to weapons of the pistol variety, Nintendo seems not to have learned the lesson of its former adversary, Atari, and brought only a rapier to the fight.

Let us travel back in time to when the Tramiel family bought Atari from Time-Warner. Wanting to turn the video game company into a computer giant, the new owners shelved the then revolutionary 8-bit Atari 7800 in 1984, even though the unit was completely ready to take the market by storm. Nintendo came out with the NES in 1985 and with it, revolutionary new games. You may have heard of them, *Super Mario Brothers, The Legend of Zelda, Metroid, Rygar*, etc. Atari brought the 7800 back from the dead but instead of making new games, they just remade the same old ones that people had been playing for years. Games like *Joust, River Raid, Pole Position,* and *Pac-Man* just weren't that interesting anymore, especially compared to the exciting new titles that Nintendo was pumping out.

Now let's go back to the present. Q: What is Nintendo's marketing strategy for their new game system? A: Another Mario game. Another freak'n Zelda game. All the same stuff, over and over again. I sincerely hope that there is at least one Nintendo executive reading this article, because if not, Nintendo is gonna get creamed.

CGM

SPIDER-MAN

BY PATRICK WONG

The sight of Spider-Man scaling a building is a familiar one. Like the classic Atari 2600 game, Spidey's opening appearance in his latest videogame has our favorite Wall Crawler climbing one of New York's many tall skyscrapers. Seconds later, the familiarity would end and suddenly it's unlike any Spider-Man videogame we've ever played before. There's satisfaction when a game is done right! so Spidey can do whatever a spider can.

Activision's Spider-Man is Spidey's second offering in the 32/64 bit markets. His first 32-bit game, Web of Fire, for Sega's 32X was a disaster and fans of the long running comic book series and television shows were wondering if there would ever be that great Spider-Man videogame. Developer Edge of Reality has taken Spidey into the 22nd Century by bringing us what we've been waiting for: the first true Spider-Man videogame.

During a press conference presented by Dr. Octopus to unveil his new technology, Spider-Man appears out of nowhere, disrupts Octopus' speech, and steals the doctors latest technology! Meanwhile, in the audience, a Daily Bugle photographer by the name of Peter Parker is shocked to learn there's another Spider-Man in his city! Suddenly he's bumped from behind,. he turns around and realizes it's Eddie Brock (AKA Venom!) taking pictures of the action on the stage. The imposter Spider-Man, realizing his picture is being taken, shoots a web, destroying Brock's camera and an enraged Eddie Brock transforms into the evil super-villain Venom. He jumps on the stage to get his revenge because Spider-Man has ruined his life once again! The plot line is familiar to all Spidey fans tried and true: Spider-Man's been framed again, and New York City is going to be in for a nightmare!

Admittedly, fans reading the comic book-like cut-frames during the introduction will realize this Plotline has been done so many times before in previous spider-man games. Thankfully, the game play and 3-D environment feature enough distractions for the player to put the details of the cheesy plot aside (at least until they're forced to watch the next comic book cut scenes!).

From the skyscrapers to the trains & sewers, and the villain's secret hideouts, Spider-Man's graphics are stunning. For the first time, gamers can web swing from one skyscraper to another in a rich 3-D environment that looks so beautiful, gamers will hardly notice Spidey shooting his webs straight up into the sky!

A great number of Spidey's friends and foes are included as well. From the silver aged Scorpion and Rhino, to the modern day Venom and Carnage, to even unheard of criminal gangs like the Jade Syndicate, you cannot want for more characters. Family & friends are here as well; Mary Jane Parker, the Black Cat, and even the Human Torch all make appearances. Even old J. Jonah Jameson makes an appearance, blaming Spider-Man for the city's wrongs.

Other nice details include the comic book covers, which open each new chapter of the game, as well as various comic book icons that, when picked up, will allow you to view actual covers from Spidey's classic collections of comic books. ,Even the catchy tune from the 60's cartoon show is included when you turn the game on! However, the greatest Touch of nostalgia is when Spidey's co-creator, Stan Lee, narrates the game's opening scene (bringing back memories of his familiar voice during the 80's television show, "Spider-Man and his Amazing Friends."

Along with the good aspects, there are also some minor annoyances. Besides the poor storyline, another irritation is the controls. Unlike previous Spidey games, where the action takes place using a limited number of buttons, Spider-Man requires the use of almost all the N64's buttons! Everything from shooting webs, to punching & kicking, to web swinging, web shooting, and web targeting Are all controlled by separate buttons. Also, pulling off some of Spidey's special moves (web dome and the web yank) can be difficult because the buttons don't always respond as they should.

The game also has a habit of freezing late in the stage of a game. At times you may be trying to recover one of the hidden comic book icons, and the game will freeze on you! Unfortunately, the game forces you to use save points instead of allowing you to save as you progress.

Other minor annoyances come from the camera that follows Spidey throughout the game. The camera tends to get confused as to which way you're going (Especially when you're on a ceiling or climbing a wall!). combine a camera that can't tell which way is up, and the controller unable to determine which way you're trying to guide the Web Slinger, and you'll end up with awkward and jerky movements at the most inopportune times. Other times, the camera will actually get too close to Spider-Man, blocking your view and may open you up to attacks from the ground, sky, or opponents. Sometimes the Spidey compass points in the wrong direction, causing Spidey to miss a nearby building and end up making a splash (a Spider Squish?) on Broadway!

Perhaps the most exciting chapter in the game involves the action-packed Police chase across the city early in the game. Here the action is reminiscent of a police chase scene from the Brandon Lee film, "The Crow." The Police are relentless, and their helicopter seems to be able to find Spidey at all angles!

Spider-Man is the first Spidey videogame which will satisfy all the cravings Spidey fans have had over the years. Everything from the web swinging, use of his spider sense, wall crawling, and almost anything else you can think of are included in this game.

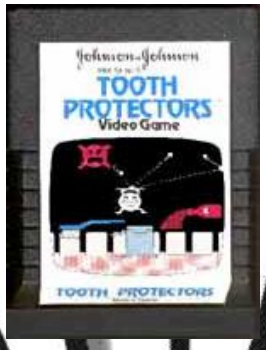
Spider-Man is the first step in the right direction for the Spidey titles. Although the story was terrible, gamers can imagine what sequels will be like in the coming years. A great Spider-Man story should benefit from a single main Super Villain, along with some minor villains. Perhaps the developers can borrow from Sega's Shenmue, where the action is slower paced and gives the gamer time to solve a case in an alternative way instead of following a single storyline. Perhaps he or she can investigate as Peter Parker, decide to search every building in the city one at a time until he finds the hideout, or just stay at home with Mary Jane and let the city rot in hell. With the Playstation 2 and the Nintendo's upcoming GameCube, the possibilities are seemingly endless.

In a virtual world where Super Villains can exist and terrorize New York, Who can New Yorkers turn to in their time of need? Make mine Spider-Man! Until next time True Believers!

Spider-Man (N64)
Publisher: Activision
Developer: Edge of Reality
Price: $49.99

BEN'S FUL-FILLING FIND

by
Ben Valdes



From March until August of last year, I found nothing. It wasn't for lack of trying. I pounded my thrift stores, yard sales, and flea markets with a vengeance, looking for a final found-in-the-wild rarity to cap off my collection of classic video games. "If I can bag just one more ER," I swore to myself, "I'll never paw through another urine scented pile of moldy eight-track tapes and naked Barbie dolls again for as long as I live!" It was a lengthy oath to be sure, but one that countless repetition had long ago turned to rote. I uttered it for the first time dozens of ER's ago, and every Extremely Rare game I found thereafter took greater time and effort for me to find than the last. Oh, but the adrenaline rush that came with each new conquest! No matter how long the drought, the thrill was always enough to reset my vow and keep me in the hunt for one "last" find. But by mid-summer, it appeared my sources had truly all run dry. It was as if someone had discovered a dribbling tap in the desert and suddenly twisted it tight. As summer dragged on, I canvassed my hunting grounds with escalating urgency. Nothing. There wasn't a Pac-Man or a Combat to be found. Game Over. Or so I thought.

I knew damn well what was happening on the Internet. eBay! Four years ago, a handful of smudgy-faced web heads knew what it was. Now it has grown into not only the largest online auction web site, but America's favorite pastime as well. At this very moment, every Uncle Rolf and Aunt Ina in the country has a rusty lunchbox or a plastic yard flamingo for auction on e-Bay. There was a time when Spring Cleaning and Back to School meant truckloads of donated goods for the local charities. Now, Back to School means new episodes of The Antiques Road Show, and Spring Cleaning means clearing everything out of attic and closet down to the dust bunnies and hawking it on e-Bay. It used to be that I could walk into any thrift store on any day of the week and sift through Atari games by the box load. What chance is there now that anyone will donate twenty year old video games to charity? Everything older than ten months has suddenly become THE hot new collectible on e-Bay. Now that I think of it, I don't see too many naked Barbies turning up at Goodwill anymore, either.

On August 12, my ritual Saturday thrift store blitzkrieg was interrupted. Charles had an appointment with his dentist that morning, and my wife was too sick to take him. I turned hopefully to my daughter, but I knew it wouldn't be right to ask her to take him. She was too young to be driving without parental supervision anyway, having celebrated her second birthday only a few weeks ago. So I was volunteered. My son had been scheduled for some fairly major work: two fillings, a cleaning, and then his teeth were to be sealed with a plastic film to protect them from getting more cavities. Sure, I was thrilled that he was getting it all taken care of, but I was pretty bummed about the bite it would take out of my prime hunting day.

My car screeched to a stop in the parking lot at 9:30 to the second. It took aggressive driving to sneak in the visit to The Bargain Bin and still make the dentist on time, but I was up to the task. All of the thrifts on my Saturday circuit open at 9 a.m., and under normal circumstances I would be entering my third one right about now. But not today. Today, my morning would be spent thumbing through back issues of Ladies' Home Journal, The Oral Hygiene Genie or whatever god-awful rags the waiting room held that hadn't a prayer of tempting theft. Where the hell was that Game Boy when you really needed it!

It was well past noon when Dr. Snare had finally finished with Charles and called me into his office. There would be nothing left for me now. My video game collecting competition had been swarming like locusts all morning without me. Couldn't there at least have been a stinking label-less Frogger at Bargain Bin? I stopped myself short of thinking this day couldn't possibly get any worse. As I entered the doctor's office, I braced myself for the discussion that was certain to follow. He would soon be explaining to me how much orthodontia it would take to allow Charles to lead a normal life. "Please remove your wallet, bend over and say 'ahhhh.'"

Dr. Snare had been speaking for a while, but Charles must have absorbed more of it than I did. I was elsewhere, distracted by the unusual amount of clutter in the office. Books, periodicals, patient files, and children's toys teetered in sloppy towers on the desk. There were overstuffed boxes on the floor and circuit boards with dangling wires jammed into bookcases. His office looked nothing at all like that of a dental professional. It looked more to me like... like a Thrift Store! And as ridiculous as it sounds, my search instinct had been triggered. Like a ravenous bird of prey, my darting eyes swept the nooks and crannies of his office for video games.

The bookcase that lined the far wall behind his desk was a good fifteen feet from where I stood, but not distant enough to stop me from spotting it! Inside that bookcase, sandwiched between a row of books and a stack of envelopes, the glint of metal contacts froze my eye. They smiled at me like teeth extending from a shadowy rectangular mouth of plastic. The mouth was the same size as the business end of an Atari video game cartridge!
Pointing, "Is that a video game in your bookcase?" I asked. In my wildest fantasies, I never dreamed I would be asking this question inside my dentist's office. Nevertheless, the query was familiar enough to me from other environs that I knew at once I had struck the perfect balance between curiosity and indifference.

Dr. Snare hesitated, and then he turned to the bookcase. "You mean this?" he asked, resting a hand on a radio controller of some sort.

"No. One shelf up," I directed.

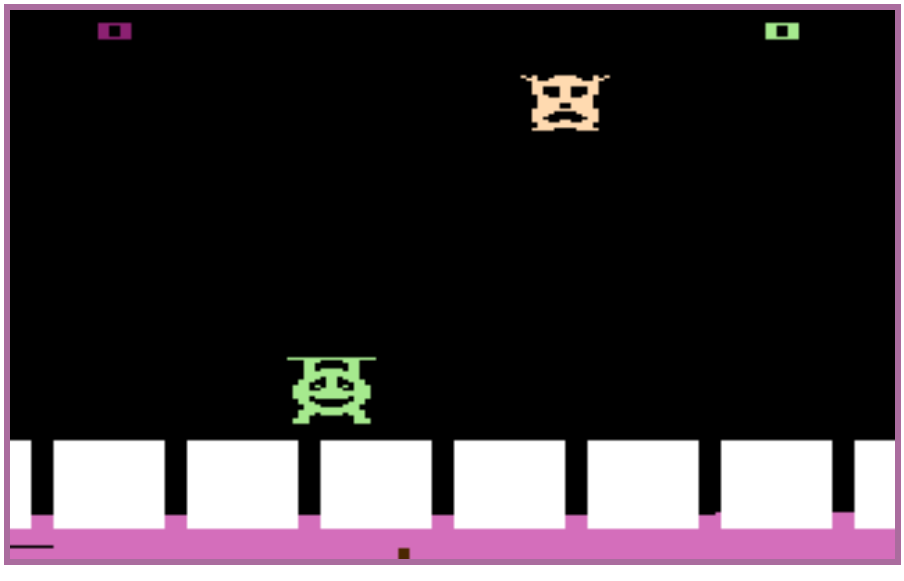
"This?" he asked again, resting a finger on a PC modem card.

"No." My hand twitched, waving him just the teeniest bit to the right.

He raised a bundle of letters bound by a rubber band so cracked with age that it disintegrated when he lifted it. "This?"

"Yeah, that's it," I said as excitedly as a man who spent the last three hours reading about the ravages of periodontal disease possibly can.

Dr. Snare extracted the glinting teeth from his bookcase. It was an Atari cartridge, all right. As he examined it, his face wore the puzzled expression of a man struggling mightily to recall a long forgotten memory.
HOLY CRAP!!!! It was Tooth Protectors!!! I couldn't believe it. Not in a million years does anything like this happen in real life. Not in mine, anyway. Tooth Protectors is so bloody rare, veteran collectors doubt its existence. Never sold in stores, Tooth Protectors was a promotional video game that was produced in frightfully small quantity. The game was available only via a special mail order offer to customers who purchased Johnson & Johnson products such as Crest toothpaste. I knew of a dozen other collectors with larger collections than my own. Not one of them had Tooth Protectors. The game was seldom even discussed. But whenever talk did come up, it was always in skeptical tones or solemn whispers. There was nothing in between.



I had to turn my head because my jaw was gaping and my eyes were bulging so wide I could see them. Micro-tremors rattled me to my core. Theatrical as it was involuntary, I mouthed the words, "Tooth Protectors" to the wall behind me. The wall was flawlessly unimpressed. It was precisely the reaction I needed to help me find my composure. By the time the doctor looked up from

the game he held in his hands, I was already facing him. My flea market seasoned poker face was firmly set.

"I had an Atari video game system," the doctor said wistfully. "Years ago, back in med school." With a bare hand he combed his shock of dark hair in one slow motion sweep as he turned the video game over in his hand with the other. He reflected in silence for so long I could hear myself age.

"Do you actually HAVE an Atari?" his voice finally croaked in amazement. "Do you still play it?"

"Not me," I lied, "my son does. Atari is the only game system we can afford. The games are dirt cheap when you find them at Goodwill stores, but they are getting kinda hard to find. They haven't made new games for it in years, you know."

Dr. Snare listened intently. I had my rhythm going, and I ran with it. "I usually pick up old Atari games at yard sales and flea markets for a dollar or two a pop. Yeah, they're hopelessly obsolete, but not to a seven-year old. Charles enjoys playing them just as much as I did back when they were new!"

The dentist paused again, churning my words over in his head, riding them down a second journey through the decades. At last, he looked up and smiled. "Well, if that's the case... Here ya go!" He lobbed the video game over his desk to my son's outstretched hands. Now, I must have seen that boy drop 500 fly balls for every one that he caught out on the little league field. I winced, preparing myself for the tragedy that was certain to follow. A Holy Grail was about to shatter into a thousand shards of plastic on the marble tile floor. It was a miracle that did not happen. Restraining myself from making a leaping, diving catch was, perhaps, an even greater miracle.

"Nice catch, Charles!" I beamed, ruffling my fingers through his bristle short hair. Charles looked up at me and gave me the biggest, brightest smile I had ever seen. "Yesss!" he said.

"That's for being a brave little man today," the dentist said to Charles.

"Two fillings today, and you didn't cry. Not even once!"

We were out of his office and skipping down the hall when Dr. Snare poked his head out. "Now that's it for you, Charles." His words bounded down the hall loudly enough for the front desk secretary to hear. "Don't go asking for a free balloon, too." And in that instant, the most brilliant smile I had ever seen was gone. Disappointment, frustration and anger washed over Charles' face. In a second, I knew, he would be crying.

"Forget about it, Charles!" I laughed, trying desperately to allay his frustration. "Let's go to Party World! I'll buy you a dozen balloons. Helium! Any color you want. And you can pick out another dozen for your sister, too. How does that sound?"

"Great, Dad!" And in the heartbeat that followed, Charles' thoughts of crying were as forgotten as my disappointment over missing Saturday's thrift run.

"Here. You can have this old video game," Charles said to me when we climbed into the car. He proudly tapped a finger on his big polymer plastic sealed grin. "I already have my tooth protectors!" I smiled down at him so hard my face nearly split in two.

It's been almost 6 months now, and I haven't found squat since. Every weekend I come home from my bone-dry routes with nothing new to add to my collection. Charles is always there to greet me at the front door. Sometimes he sees disappointment washing over my face, and sometimes it must look to him as if I am about to cry. That's when he warms me up with a great big Charles smile. My disappointment vanishes in a flash.

And then he taps on his teeth.

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Win!

Contest Time!

Good Deal Games And *Classic Gamer Magazine*

Have gotten together to bring you another contest. **The prize?** None other than the Good Deal Games' newest release for the **Sega CD**, **Bug Blasters**. So, how do you win? Simple! Visit the Good Deal Games website at http://www.gooddealgames.com and click on the WGDG link. Write down the titles of the next three songs you hear and email them to us at cav@classicgamer.com. Or, mail in a 3"x5" card with the words, "WGDG BUG BLASTERS" to Classic Gamer Magazine, 7770 Regents Road #113-293, San Diego, CA 92122. We'll choose the winner from a random drawing on June 1, 2001.

Rules

Limit one entry per person. Contributors/Staff of Classic Gamer Magazine not eligible. Contributors/Staff of Good Deal Games not eligible. Odds of winning based on number of entries received.

A band of warrior insects calling themselves 'The league of Insects' under the control of General Grub and El Roacho, have captured City Hall and are holding Los Angeles hostage! You are the rookie member of the elite fighting force, The Bug Blasters. Accompanied by a crack team of experts, including Team Captain McVay, a veteran of the New York City Roach Wars of '79, you must vanquish the insect threat throughout the city and the long overlooked underground tunnels in which they have been swarming. Prevent these pests from further capturing and cocooning humans. You are an exterminator. Destroy the hive, and get out alive before it's too late!

Several months ago, I contracted strep throat for the first time in my 26 years on the planet. Don't most folks get this out of the way when they're five? I've always been the procrastinator... Anyway, I was prescribed various medications to ease the pain, and spent my afternoons in a medicated stupor, eating Jell-O and drinking spring water. Now don't be envious, it's not as fun as it sounds.

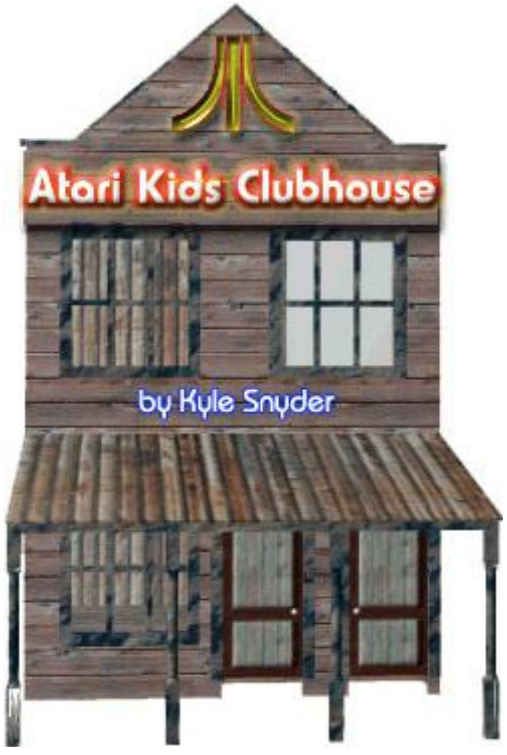
However, as my mind wandered, not caring whether this was due to the Percoset or the illness in general, I got to thinking about the cartoons inspired by video games in the early 80's. Hmmmmm.... ABC had Pac-Man and Dragon's Lair cartoons... CBS had Pole Position and Saturday Supercade (which had seven different games represented throughout its run.) I wonder why NBC had no video game inspired cartoon?

Then I recalled those old Atari commercials where all the neighborhood kids were playing the newest 2600 stuff in a rickety "Honey Comb Hideout" kind of backyard shack, and thought, "Wouldn't it have been great if NBC had taken the initiative, and created... THE ATARI CLUBHOUSE KIDS SHOW!"

The Atari Clubhouse Kids show would've been 30 minutes long, and the theme song would've incorporated the familiar "have you played Atari today" jingle from the commercials. You could have five elementary and middle school age kids... All stock clichéd characters, exactly like Hanna-Barbera and Ruby-Spears used over and over in cartoons of that era. There'd be the slobby fat white boy, who we'll nickname "Snacks" due to his penchant for always having a candy bar or bag of chips in hand. Then you'd have the sensible black girl, whose name could be "Sheryl," and she'd be the conscience of the show. Of course you'd need a computer whiz kid, and that would be "Syntax," a young asian lad with oversized eyeglasses. The group would round out with "Jenny," a prissy, but good natured blonde girl, and the "leader" of the group, "Matt." He's a rich jock-type, always in control and never one to admit when he's wrong. Oh yeah, don't forget the sidekick pet dog and cat; they could be named "Bit" and "Byte!"

The premier episode would explain how one day, the kids were playing Atari in the clubhouse, when a bright light appeared before them and took the shape of a beautiful woman in flowing robes. She identifies herself as "Stella, the Goddess of Atari." She implores the children for their help in restoring harmony to various parallel worlds. Never a bunch to pass up adventure, they all eagerly agree. Stella continues to explain that when she needs their help, one of their Atari game cartridges will glow brightly. The children are then to insert that particular game into the Atari, and the world of the game will open to become something beyond their wildest imagination! She disappears, but not before the first game starts to glow, and the show gets rolling.

Oftentimes the episodes would be of a straight science fiction nature, such as the "Asteroids," "Missile Command," or "Yars Revenge" storylines. But deviations from the formula would arise, such as the whimsical "Demons to Diamonds" plot, wherein a small race of dwarves is beleagured by demons intent on stealing their riches; the western "Outlaw" episode, where the kids have to instill courage in the most unlikely



sharpshooter in town; or the film noir inspired "Codebreaker" story, where the kids team up with a Bogart-style detective to track down a wanted criminal.

On occasion, the neighborhood bully "Brooks" would harrass the group, jealous over his exclusion from the club. Sometimes he would steal, or in one particular episode, BREAK their Atari with the help of his younger and perpetually nervous brother "Kevin." Generally, the brothers only interfere with the real world actions of the kids, but in an episode late in the first season, they discover a loose board in the roof of the clubhouse. Just as the gang is preparing to insert the blinking "Slot Racers" cartridge into the system, Brooks leans in a little too closely and tumbles through the roof, pulling brother Kevin in with him. This results in the kids (and the brothers) getting sucked into the Slot Racers' realm. Now the kids not only have to help the inhabitants of the city destroy the robot cars that are terrorizing their town, but they have to track down Brooks and Kevin and return them to safety, despite the fact that they'd love to leave them there forever. Unfortunately, they get more than they bargained for when they find the brothers have been made henchmen of the robot car army!

Other favorite first season episodes include the one based on "Adventure," where the whole gang gets locked away in the various castles, leaving Snacks as the one to fight the dragons, contend with that pesky bat, and search for the golden chalice. There's also the "Warlords" episode, where each kid has to convince his or her "king" to make peace, while Syntax oversees the entire proceedings.

The second season gets started with a bang. The episodes of "Haunted House," where the kids have to retrieve the parts of a historic urn before the spectral forces dwelling in the old Victorian get THEM; and the "Star Raiders" episode, which finds the gang defending neutral starbases and cities against the evil Zylon warships, were two of the highest rated children's shows of the year.

Unfortunately, weak episodes such as "Centipede," "Dig Dug," and "Alpha Beam," which did not feature Sesame Street's Ernie (unlike the cartridge itself), demonstrated that time was running out for the series, and ratings started to decline.

The series picked up slightly in the spring of 1983, with a four part episode many consider to be the best of the series, entitled "Swordquest." Each week, a new world was presented, based on Earthworld, Fireworld, Waterworld, and Airworld, respectively. Tor and Tarra from the comic books that accompanied the cartridges were on hand to fight the creatures that children just couldn't handle. Unlike the actual Swordquest contest, all four episodes were complete and aired in their entirety, allowing perhaps the only glimpse into what the cartridge of Airworld may have been like.

By the time the repeats were being aired, the show had fully run out of steam, and the door to the Atari Clubhouse Kids show was closed. Sort of. The show returned briefly with a completely revamped format in the late spring of 1984. The show was no longer associated with Atari exclusively, and was now titled the very bland "The Adventures of the Computer Warriors." The clubhouse was gone, as the kids were now portrayed as young high schoolers who would get sucked into the game world by forces they never understood or discovered. (No Stella here!) Snacks was dropped as a character, as were Bit and Byte, and were replaced by "Wheels," a new kid in town who was wheelchair bound, and "Missy," Jenny's younger sister, seen occasionally on the earlier show. In the game world, the characters became "the Computer Warriors" with superhero-style outfits and special powers, customized per episode, allowing them to help defeat the antagonists of whatever game they were playing.

Poor stories, poor animation, and the abandonment of all that had made the Atari Clubhouse Kids Show successful doomed Computer Warriors to a short five week run.

Two years later, as the Nintendo and the Sega Master System were revitilizing the market in the U.S. for home video game systems, Atari began to make a comeback by marketing its 2600 jr. system and re-releasing many old favorites. This prompted the USA cable network to purchase the rights to the "Atari Clubhouse Kids" show, and air episodes during its "USA Cartoon Express" weekday morning block. After 2 years in syndicated repeats, the clubhouse was dropped from the line up.

If only there really was some animation studio someplace with dusty old tapes of the clubhouse show. It sure would have been great to be able to watch such a show back then, and it would be even cooler to get out the tapes and watch it now. So from Stella, Snacks, Sheryl, Syntax, Jenny, and Matt; a proud Atari club salute, and
thanks for dreaming.

CGM

Super Huey

Cosmi, 1985 For the C-64

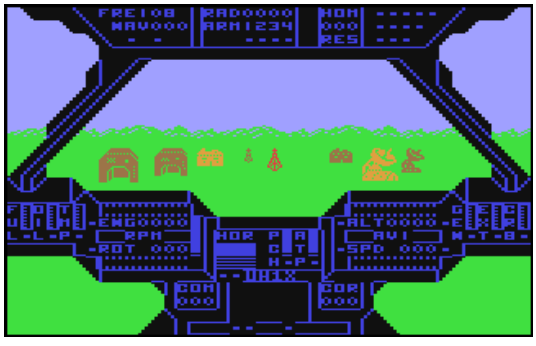
By Fred Pierson

For the Commodore 64, Cosmi brought out a good number of titles during its support. Starting in the early years, they released Aztec Challenge, Caverns of Khafka, Monster Trivia, some productivity and educational packages, and one of my favorites, Forbidden Forest. Then, in 1985, Cosmi released the remarkable sequel to FF, Beyond the Forbidden Forest, and entered into the simulation genre, more specifically, aircraft simulation. Released in the last quarter of '85, Super Huey was one of, if not, THE first true helicopter simulations available for the 64, and perhaps for the entire computer scene. In the game, you take control of the Huey UH-IX; at that time, an experimental high performance aircraft.

Starting at your airbase, you choose one of four missions—Flight Instruction, Exploration, Rescue, or Combat. The selection is chosen by inputting the respective three-letter code. Flight Instruction is just that—getting familiar with all aspects of your aircraft—instrumentation, engage engines, take-off, control, and landing. In Exploration, you can map out the territory and level of terrain, as well as finding significant features and landmarks. Rescue has you trying to locate lost military personnel in the mountains. You must retrieve any who are injured and return to base. In Combat, there is a secret installation that could be a security threat. You are to determine the enemy's ground and air strength to decide if it is feasible for attack.

After selecting a mission, you are inside the cockpit, given a first person view looking at the screen. There are 29 instruments, from a compass and horizon to malfunction lights and direction finders. These instruments are located in front of you and above you on the chopper ceiling. The graphics are nothing short of excellent with the representation of the interior of a real Huey—instruments, gauges, and the outline of windows—front, side, and floor. The sound and effects are nice as well, replicating the sounds of lift and artillery, and the music is just plain awesome.

Control is by a single joystick and the input of the three-letter codes. To maneuver, the fire button must be depressed along with moving the joystick in the desired direction. In combat, it will be a little aggravating to know that you cannot fire weapons and move at the same time, since both utilize the button. If done right, though, there is a method that will turn out to be advantageous. The gameplay is absolutely fabulous, and is definitely worth recurring play time. While doing research, I came across an astonishing fact: by the end of '87, Super Huey had sold more than 150,000 copies. Numbers like that for a computer system, especially at that time, were unheard of. I do not think many of today's PC titles reach that point. What I found astonishing and was surprised to learn once again, is that Cosmi reduced the recommended retail price to a low $12.95. This, after being on the market for not even two years. Titles from other companies released at the same time were still commanding their same suggested price of twice the 'now asking price' for SH. I know Cosmi was always a budget company, in a manner of speaking, meaning most of their games did not exceed $20-$25, but less than two years? Man! Well, I do not have the facts on what I am about to state, but I am sure this lower price helped sell this #1 title even more, and that the overall total of copies sold until its commercial ceasing probably more than doubled, especially with the additional and increased sales of the 64 system over the next few years.



This game is without a doubt a classic, in all sense of the word. There is also a version for the Atari 7800, which is rather fair. Cosmi also released Super Huey II for the 64 in 1986 (I do not have it, and I have never played it, but I have heard it is comparable to the original). Then, at the end of 2000, Super Huey III was released for the PC (see review below).

Super Huey is ranked as one of the Top 10 games during the first 10 years of computer gaming. Personally, I would rank it in the Top 10 of all time. Paul Norman is a force of creativity, and as such, provided me with hours of entertainment back in my early 64 days (and continues to do so to this day!) I hope to bring word of Paul's other creations in a future issue, but until then, take the time to play his most successful game of all time.

Take off and fly high!

CGM

Super Huey I + III

Super Huey III

Cosmi, 2000 for the PC

By Chris Cavanaugh

To be perfectly honest, I've never played the original *Super Huey* in my life. Not that I didn't want to, it's just that I was an Apple II man, and I was busy with games such as Super Taxman and Drol. So, I decided to use this handicap as an advantage, and judge Super Huey III on its own merits, rather than as a remake or an update.

The first thing you'll notice about Super Huey, before you even pop it into your computer, is the price. It's cheap! Cosmi Software is known for its budget software, yet high quality library, and Super Huey III is no exception. Now I know you Classic Gamers are a thrifty lot so this little piece of info puts us into positive territory right off the bat.

"Sure it's cheap! But doesn't that mean, it sucks?". Nope! Not at all. Cosmi has built a pretty impressive 3D helicopter flight simulator. Yeah, it's not Microsoft Flight Simulator, but who needs all those gauges, anyway? What you do get is a slick looking and challenging game.

Man the technologically superior Super Huey IXB into 35 missions to bomb radar sites and rescue your men. This time around, the new and improved Huey is sporting cool, new weapons. Standard ones, such as the single shot gun (kinda useless) and a machine gun (much better!) are combined with "lock on" heat seeking missiles (oh yeah!) and the nifty flamethrower for those of you who like your enemies extra crispy.

As for the missions themselves, they tend to start out on the fairly easy side, hardly registering on the challenge-o-meter. However, as you progress they do get more difficult. You'll encounter tanks, zeppelins, radar installations and even other hostile helicopters. I think my only beefs with the game would be that the levels are far too brief and sometimes you'd kill for the copter to go faster.

The music and sounds are nice as well. The "Whup! Whup! Whup!" of your chopper blades combined with the rousing melody of "Flight of the Valkyries" will keep you in the destroying spirit.

Super Huey III is a fun game to kill some time with. Go to download.com and get the free demo or hit up www.cosmi.com for more details.

CGM

Game Lord's C-64 Dungeon

By Fred Pierson

War games... most war games are for those gamers who are open to strategy, and have the time to dedicate to play. Back when I first got involved with the 64, I never got into war games. I was always into the arcade/action/adventure. The same went for my buddies. However, as the years went on, I did pick up copies of a few for my collection. I never really played them, though, as I did not find them too satisfying. Then there were those I read about that I knew I would enjoy, yet I never got a chance to obtain copies. SSI was the leader in producing war games for the 64, followed by Australia's SSG. Overall, many of their titles can be considered within the top five percent of all available games for the 64, as the programming and thought put into each game is magnificent. There were other companies that produced top-notch titles, even if only one. DataSoft, EA, Microprose, and Origin, to name but a few (the latter two producing two of my favorite 64 war games). Let me mention that I do not have many of these games. I can say that I had knowledge of every one of these games, being a 64 collector, and with that, wanting to get all there is, including all war games. The descriptions of each game are a result of doing much research through the several 64 zines, primarily Compute's! Gazette and INFO. No personal reviews are provided for the games, again, since I do not have a majority of these games as of yet, and could not form an opinion. You will notice, though, that I have selected a few games I believe are noteworthy, and are definitely worth checking out. I formed these opinions from first, wanting to get these games when they were initially released, and from that, because of what I read back at that time. I also had the chance to actually see some of these titles on the shelves and take the time to review the game box and the screenshots. While going through the zines, reading the respective reviews, I realized just how much I am missing and why I always wanted the games since their release.

Many of the games are quite different in nature, and of course, in gameplay. The games by SSI and SSG are those that are fought on open and hexagonal battlefields. The others can be considered more of a simulation, but with its relation to a respective war, they were included. Then there are a couple that are not really war games, but are 'just defeat the enemy.' Regarding this, I bring up *The Train.* I included this because the object of the game is to bring the stolen Nazi train to the Normandy border. I basically related this to WWII, and for those of you who have seen the movie on which this game is based, you know this game deserves to be in this class. Also, this happens to be within my top 10 C-64 games of all time.

Let me also comment on War Games Construction Set. As far as the battle layout is concerned, from what I always had in mind, and what I have read, this was never as good as SSG's titles. One review said the commands are performed rather slowly. I cannot testify to that, so I do not know if it is true. Should it be, this is where the comparison to SSG's games comes about, as they go through practically flawless. The reason I always wanted this and figured this would be a good game to play, is its diversity of battles. You can go all the way back to ancient times, medieval times, (one I definitely would like to check out, as I am into that), and warp, so to speak, out to the future, to fight sci-fi style. With its variation of themes, it is worth the time. I believe this list to be as comprehensive as can be pertaining to war games. I am sure there will be some that may say I left off some. If so, I would appreciate your input. Perhaps, you and I may view the game differently. Now, if there is a game that should've been listed and wasn't, it obviously was an oversight, or I did not come across any info.

Again, I welcome any input. All correspondence may be directed to me via email at gamelord@nep.net.

If you are looking to play a wargame on the 64, here is a list of games that are available. I do suggest checking out my own personal choices, as I believe you will see just how incredible these games are, and how amazing the 64 is. Forward and attack!

(Note: Due to reconsideration, I have decided not to include the Paradroid review in this issue. Be on the lookout for it in an upcoming issue).

The Grand List of War Games for the C-64!

Annals of Rome PSS 1988
273 B.C.—Lead the Roman Citizen Legionnaire against surrounding enemies.

Arctic Fox Electronic Arts 1986

B-24 SSI 1987
Fly a World War II B-24 Liberator to determine the course of action for the 460th Bomber Group. Contains 19 different missions.

Baltic 1985 SSI 1984
Command NATO forces in their attempt rescue troops trapped in West Berlin. Part of SSI's When Superpower Collide series.

Battalion Commander SSI 1985

Battle of Antietam SSI 1985
September 17, 1862--The bloodiest battle of the Civil War.

Battle of Britain Firebird 1986
July to October 1940: Take part in the defeat of the Luftwaffe in their attempt to defeat the R.A.F. prior to Operation Sealion.

Battle Cruiser SSI 1987

Battle for Midway Firebird/PSS 1986
June 4, 1942: Command the US Pacific Fleet six months after the attack on Pearl Harbor.
Battle for Normandy SSI 1984

Battlefront SSG 1986
Take role as a corps commander in four different battles in Crete, Stalingrad, Saipan, and Bastogne during WWII. ****GL's choice for "The Pick to Play."**

Battlegroup SSI 1986
Armored combat on the Western Front in WWII.

Bismark: The North Sea Chase IntelliCreations/DataSoft 1987 Command the Royal Navy or the German battleship that sunk the H.M.S. Hood in 1941.

Blue Power, Grey Smoke Garde 1987
Fight in the Civil War through three scenarios: Gettysburg, Antietam, and Chickamauga.

Borodino: 1812 Napoleon in Russia KRENtek 1987
Reenact the battle that decided Napoleon's invasion of Russia and forced his retreat. Be Napoleon directing infantry, cavalry, and artillery while the computer plays as the Russians. Also contains a two-player option.

Breakthrough in the Ardennes SSI 1984
Battle of the Bulge simulation.

Broadsides SSI 1985
Ship-to-ship combat during the Napoleonic era.

Carrier Force SSI 1985
Major naval battles between the US and Japan in the Pacific.

Carriers at War SSG 1985
Take part in five crucial battles of WWII, or create an original.

Chickamauga GDW/EA 1986

Civil War Avalon Hill 1988

Colonial Conquest SSI 1985
Conquer the world during the Age of Imperialism.

Combat Leader SSI 1984
Tank-Battle with over 70 different tanks.

Computer Ambush SSI 1985
Squad vs. squad in WWII France.

Conflict in Vietnam Microprose 1985
Take command of U.S. forces or the Viet Cong.

Crusade in Europe Microprose 1985
Take command in battles from D-Day to Battle of the Bulge.

Dan Bunten's Sport of War Electronic Arts 1988
Designed to take advantage of modem play, players pit their skills against other gamers, even those of other formats like Apple and PC.

Decision of the Desert Microprose 1985
Battles of North Africa 1940-42 from O'Conner's 1940 raid of Italy to the final assault on El Alamein in 1942.

Decisive Battles of the American Civil War SSG
1987 Volume One: Bull Run to Chancellorsville. Six crucial battles spanning the first half of the Civil War. Uses the Battlefront Game System. Includes 'Warplan', a wargame construction set and 'Warpaint', a graphics editor.
****GL's choice for "The Pick to Play."**

Decisive Battles of the American Civil War SSG
1988 Volume II: Gaines Mill to Chattanooga. Five battles from the middle years of the Civil War. Uses the Battlefront Game System.
*Named one of Compute!'s Gazette's Best of '88.
****GL's choice for "The Pick to Play."**

Decisive Battles of the American Civil War SSG
1989 Volume III: Battle of the Wilderness (Grant vs. Lee) to the Battle of Nashville. Covering the latter battles of the War, this is the final release in the series. Uses the Battlefront Game System. Includes 'Warplan', a wargame construction set. Additional scenarios were available from SSG through its support magazine 'Run 5.'
****GL's choice for "The Pick to Play."**

Desert Fox Electronic Arts 1986

Destroyer Escort Medalist/Microprose 1989
Aboard a naval destroyer, plan tactics and strategy in the waters of the North Atlantic during WWII.

Dreadnoughts SSI 1984

The Royal Navy versus the German Bismarck.
Eagles SSI 1984
Stage duels and dogfights with 20 different WWI planes.

Europe Ablaze SSG 1986
Sequel to Carriers at War. Select battles from "Their Finest Hour" pertaining to the Battle of Britain to "Piercing the Reich" with the 8th Air Force hammering

against the Luftwaffe in the Battle of Berlin. **Stated as the ultimate aerial wargame for any system up through its time.

Falklands 82 Firebird 1986
May 21, 1982 to June 15, 1982: The conflict of the Land Forces of the United Kingdom and Argentina. Play as the UK forces whilst the computer commands the Argentine.

Field of Fire SSI 1984
Assume command of Easy Company of the First Infantry Division during WWII.
Fifty Mission Crush SSI 1985

Fighter Command SSI 1985
Direct the RAF through the Battle of Britain including Eagle Day.

Firezone PSS 1988
Ground combat in the 21st century. Utilize tanks that use the GRAV engine allowing movement across a battlefield at the speed of a helicopter gunship.

First Over Germany SSI 1989
Choose a crew a fly a variety of missions.

Fortress SSI 1984

GATO Spectrum Holobyte 1985
Command a WWII submarine in eight different missions.

Geopolitique 1990 SSI 1985
With political, economic, and military strategy, battle the computer for world dominance.

Germany 1985 SSI 1984

Gettysburg: The Turning Point SSI 1986
The historic battle of the Civil War. Stated to be better than the excellent Battle of Antietam.

Guderian Avalon Hill 1984
Take part in the 1941 German attack on Smolensk.

Gulf Strike Avalon Hill 1984
Warfare in the Middle East.

Halls of Montezuma SSG 1987
Fight the battles of the US Marine Corps. Uses the Battlefront Game System. Includes 'Warplan', a wargame construction set and 'Warpaint', a graphics editor.
**GL's choice for "The Pick to Play."

High Seas Garde 1987

The Hunt for Red October DataSoft 1988
Based on Tom Clancy's best selling novel, take role of Soviet submarine commander Marko Ramius and attempt to defect to the US.

Iwo Jima Firebird 1986
Play as the American forces against the computer as the Japanese in what was the Marines costliest and toughest battle of WWII.

Kampfgruppe SSI 1985
Battles in the Russo-German War.

Knights of the Desert SSI 1984
Recreation of the North African Campaign of 1941-43.
Legacy of Death ??? 1987
Battle in the seas of Italy.

Legionnaire Avalon Hill 1984
Imperial Rome vs. the Gauls taking helm as Caesar.
Mech Brigade SSI 1985
Armored warfare during the 1990s.

Midway Campaign SSI 1984

Nam SSI 1986
Take part in the war in the jungles of Vietnam.

NATO Commander Microprose 1984
NATO vs. Warsaw Pact forces.

NAVCOM 6: The Gulf Defense Cosmi 1988
Take control of a warship charged with protecting oil tankers negotiating the straits of Hormuz.

Norway 1985 SSI 1985
NATO vs. Soviet forces in Norway. The last title in SSI's When Superpowers Collide series.

Ocean Ranger Activision/Mediagenic 1988
Command missilecraft to repel Soviet intruders in the Bering Sea, punish dictators and drug smugglers in Central America, secure vulnerable targets in southeast Asia, and lead retaliatory strikes in the Persian Gulf.

Omega Origin 1989
Construct a tank entirely including chassis, weapon system, and electronic countermeasures. An AI brain may also be given. Also create battlefields. Tank creations may be uploaded to bulletin boards, and downloaded to face the challenge of others' creations. Designed also for modem play, even against those of other formats—Apple, Atari, and IBM. Compete in team or free-for-alls where the best and smartest wins.
**GL's choice for "The Pick to Play."

Operation Market Garden SSI 1985
Campaign for bridgeheads in WWII Arnhem, Holland.

Operation Whirlwind Broderbund 1984

Overrun SSI 1989
Includes two games during WWIII—the NATO/Warsaw Pact and the Mideast Wars. Stated to be the most complex war game for the 64.

Panzer Grenadier SSI 1985
Take command of German infantry on the Eastern Front during WWII.

Panzer-Jagd (Panzers East!) Avalon Hill 1984 Engage in combat against the Russian forces.

Panzer Strike! SSI 1988
Take part during the Eastern Front campaign, the Western Front in 1940, and the struggle for North Africa.

Patton vs. Rommel Electronic Arts 1986

Power at Sea Accolade 1988
Take charge of a US convoy in the midst of the Battle of Leyte Gulf.

PHM Pegasus Lucasfilm/EA 1986
Guide the Patrol Hydrofoil Missile Craft in eight different real-life mission like the Persian Gulf, the Eastern Mediterranean, and the Gulf of Sidra.

RDF 1985 SSI 1984
Command the US Rapid Deployment force in retaking Soviet-captured oilfields in the Middle East. Part of the When Superpowers Collide series.

Rebel Charge at Chickamauga SSI 1988
One of the battles of the Civil War.

Red Storm Rising Microprose 1988
Another adaptation of a Tom Clancy best selling novel. Command a nuclear submarine caught in the midst of a Soviet plan for conquest of NATO.
*Named one of Compute!'s Gazette's Best of '88.
**GL's choice for "The Pick to Play."

Road to Moscow: The Eastern Front 1941-45 Ba'rac 1984
Command German troops to invade Russia in WWII

Roadwar 2000 SSI 1986
Future combat in the year 2000 after a bacteriological war destroyed all of civilization. Find the eight scientists and bring them back to the secret underground lab.
**GL's "The Pick to choice for Play."

Russia SSG 1987
Assume command during the Russo-German war of 1941-45. Uses the Battlefront Game System.
**GL's choice for "The Pick to Play."

Shiloh: Grant's Trial SSI 1988

Silent Service Microprose 1985
Assume command of a submarine in naval combat during WWII.

Sons of Liberty SSI 1988
Three battles of the Revolutionary War—Bunker Hill, Saratoga, and Monmouth. Three different levels of rules. Play against a friend or the computer as either the Colonial or the English.

Spitfire 40 Avalon Hill 1985
Pilot a Mark I Supermarine Spitfire in WWII aerial combat.

Spitfire Ace Microprose 1986
Aerial-combat in the European Theatre during WWII.

Steel Thunder Accolade 1988
Choose from four different tanks. Also choose the mission, weapons used, and adversaries.

Storm Across Europe SSI 1989
Encompasses WWII Europe. Three player capability as well as computer controlled Allies or Russians.

Strike Fleet Lucasfilm/EA 1987
Take command of a number US Naval Task Force fleets.

Sub Battle Epyx 1987
Command six types of American subs and German Kriegs-marine U-boats during WWII.

Tactical Armor Command Avalon Hill 1984
Pit WWII British, German, American, and Russian forces against one another.

Theatre Europe Datasoft 1987
Partake in battle during the first 30 days of a hypothetical WWIII.

Tigers in the Snow SSI 1984

Tobruk: The Clash of Armour IntelliCreations/DataSoft 1987
Assume the role of Rommel in his attempt to defeat the British in North America and move into Egypt, destroying the Allies' hold on the southern Mediterranean.

The Train Accolade 1988
Hijack a Nazi train filled with stolen art treasures, maneuvering through enemy lines to the coast of Normandy. Based on the movie of the same name.
*Named one of Compute!'s Gazette's Best of '88.
**GL's choice for "The Pick to Play."

Typhoon of Steel SSI 1988

Up Periscope ActionSoft 1986
Command a WWII fleet class submarine patrolling the Atlantic and Pacific theatres of war.
USAAF SSI 1985
Recreate the daylight-bombing of Nazi Germany by the USAAF during WWII.

War in the South Pacific SSI 1986
Choose from three different scenarios: The Battle of the Coral Sea (May '42), the Invasion of Guadalcanal (Aug '42) and the Japanese attempt to counter-attack on Guadalcanal (Oct '42.)

Wargame Construction Set SSI 1986
Create original scenarios, armies, and battlemaps, and choose from four different levels of scale. Battles may be chosen from ancient times to the modern era, and also medieval to science-fiction.
**GL's choice for "The Pick to Play."

Warship SSI 1986
Engage in naval warfare in the Pacific during WWII. Choose from 79 classes of warships.

Wings of War SSI 1985
Pilot 36 different bomber and fighter planes in aerial combat in four different scenarios during WWII.

Wooden Ships & Iron Men Avalon Hill 1988
Computer version of AH's own table top game. Ship-to-ship to combat from the American Revolution to the Napoleonic era. Includes "Dockyard" option allowing design of own flagships, and Scenario Generator.

Deep Thaw

by Chris Lion

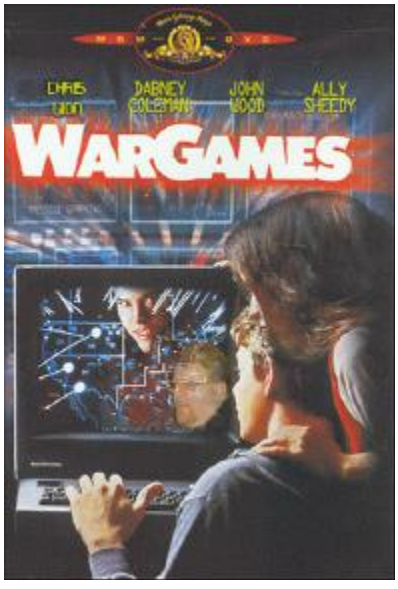
My Life as a real NORAD hacker
-or-
"Hey Buddy! I Got Your 'WOPR' right here!"

I am sick and tired of Hollywood stealing my life and making movies out of it! Every time I turn around, I find part of my life up on the big screen being portrayed by the likes of Tom Cruise or some other model-turned-actor.

It's not easy being me. I live an exciting life and I do things most people only dream of. Or make into a movie.

I think what bothers me the most is how my life has been played by such wimps and idiots. Particularly by Matthew Broderick. I took one day off in high school and he's on it like white on rice. Ferris *who?*

For the record, I dated Sarah Jessica Parker first.



What bothered me most was when he stole a couple of innocent hi-jinks in high school and turned them into the movie War Games. While they followed the truth well, let me tell you what *really* happened.

I met this cute girl in school by making her laugh when I insulted the teacher. She fell in love with me instantly. Her name was Jennifer and she looked a lot like Ally Sheedy (only with talent).

We went to my house and used my $30,000 worth of computer equipment to break into the school computer and change our grades. In the movie, Jennifer left right away, but in real life she was a tramp and stayed. I like the real Jennifer better.

In the search for video games on my computer, I found a government computer with some cool games listed. I spent the next week researching the man who created it, so I could get into the system to play "Global Thermonuclear War." I know it was dangerous, but Danger is my middle name (actually it's Francis, but Danger is way cooler).

Jennifer came by, and with her plucky spirit, she helped me get into the system! Little did I realize that I had gotten into the War Simulations computer, nicknamed "Joshua" by its creator Dr. Falken. I didn't realize that I had almost started a nuclear war! When I heard about it on the news, I decided not to play anymore. But soon Joshua was calling me! Like an obnoxious ex-girlfriend, Joshua kept calling and calling. I tried breaking it off, but Joshua would not have it. "Who is she?" he kept screaming into the phone. "It's that Jennifer, isn't it?"

A few days later I got picked up by the Feds! I think Joshua turned me in. Normally, they would take me to a local detention center, but instead they flew me directly to NORAD. Hadn't these people ever seen a James Bond movie? If you think someone is trying to destroy you, you don't take him into the heart of your operations. Yet, there I was in the middle of the most important military control center in the world.

To top it off, they left me alone in the office of the director of the computer facilities with his computer on! I checked in to see how Joshua was doing (fine, not that you care). I also checked my stocks, and balanced my checkbook (they left me in there for a very long time).

Well, I got caught on the computer by security, and they escorted me out through the main control room, where I screamed that Joshua was still playing the game, but no one believed me. Maybe it was because I stole a bunch of NORAD pens from the director's office.

After escaping from the infirmary utilizing a technique I used to call the "MacGyver" (using scissors, a tape deck, and a ham sandwich), I managed to escape the most secured building on the planet by slipping in with a tour group from Birmingham. In fact, I often escape danger by mixing in with a tour group from Birmingham.

I realized Joshua was thinking it didn't matter if the game was real or not, so I decided to go to the home of Dr. Falken, even though he'd been reported dead years ago. Joshua, while a brilliant computer, was also a *huge* gossip. He also told me who killed Kennedy…

I called Jennifer from a payphone, using my still unpatented "MacGyver" (this time a bottle cap and a little luck and a dime). Jennifer got me plane tickets to Oregon and met me there! What a plucky spirit. We quickly headed off to Dr. Falken's island retreat.

Dr. Falken loved dinosaurs and kept bad stop-action movies in his home to bore guests, telling them that bees were going to take over. He was a complete nut. We even had a conversation Jennifer would later call "bad foreshadowing" about tic-tac-toe. We, two kids that were flunking out of school, spoke eloquently about the sanctity of life and tried to convince him to talk to NORAD. Falken's response was that we could sleep on the floor. Ten bedrooms and he offers us the floor.

Jennifer and I gave up and left. We decided we were doomed; the island was remote and we were plucky teenagers with raging hormones. Our tryst was interrupted by Dr. Falken in his NORAD issued helicopter, complete with logo on the side.

Falken got us into NORAD through a series of improbable events too complicated to get into in this article or a John Badham movie.

There we were, once again in the heart of America's most important defense structure, running around yelling out to stop . . . and they did! No one shot us, they politely listened to us and took us at our word.

What continued to bug me was that no one at NORAD seemed to be able to figure out the computer was playing a game. It clearly stated this on its *only* display panel. And whenever Joshua would call me, he'd tell me about the game… and everything else: "Why, why won't you return my calls? What kind of a game are you playing with me fella? Only 24 hours until Global Thermonuclear War! Does this casing make me look fat?"

Finally, everyone at NORAD realized Joshua was just playing a game. But Joshua still wanted to win and tried to figure out the launch codes so he could really fire the missiles! Right then I realized he was never going to stop calling.

Joshua, who had been going over the scenarios for years, still hadn't figured out that war was bad. I decided that I was just the kid to teach him. No matter that the smartest people on the planet had put this computer together and were in the room, I was going to teach it.

The best way to teach him was tic-tac-toe! Jennifer nodded, "nicely foreshadowed." Just before it launched the missiles, the computer became overwhelmed by tic-tac-toe and blew up a bunch of terminals in a way that can only be seen in movies. Wow, I thought, it can handle complex nuclear missile scenarios, but can't handle tic-tac-toe?

Well, you probably saw the movie; I guess you figured out that Joshua learned. In fact, he said to Dr. Falken, "Strange game. The only winning move is to not play." And then Joshua asked Dr. Falken about playing a game of chess! He wants to play with Falken? What about me? He stalks me for weeks and then nothing? The nerve!

In the movie, everyone celebrated. In real life, they arrested me and threw me in jail for crimes against the state.

Now let me tell you about my beef with the makers of the prison drama OZ…

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